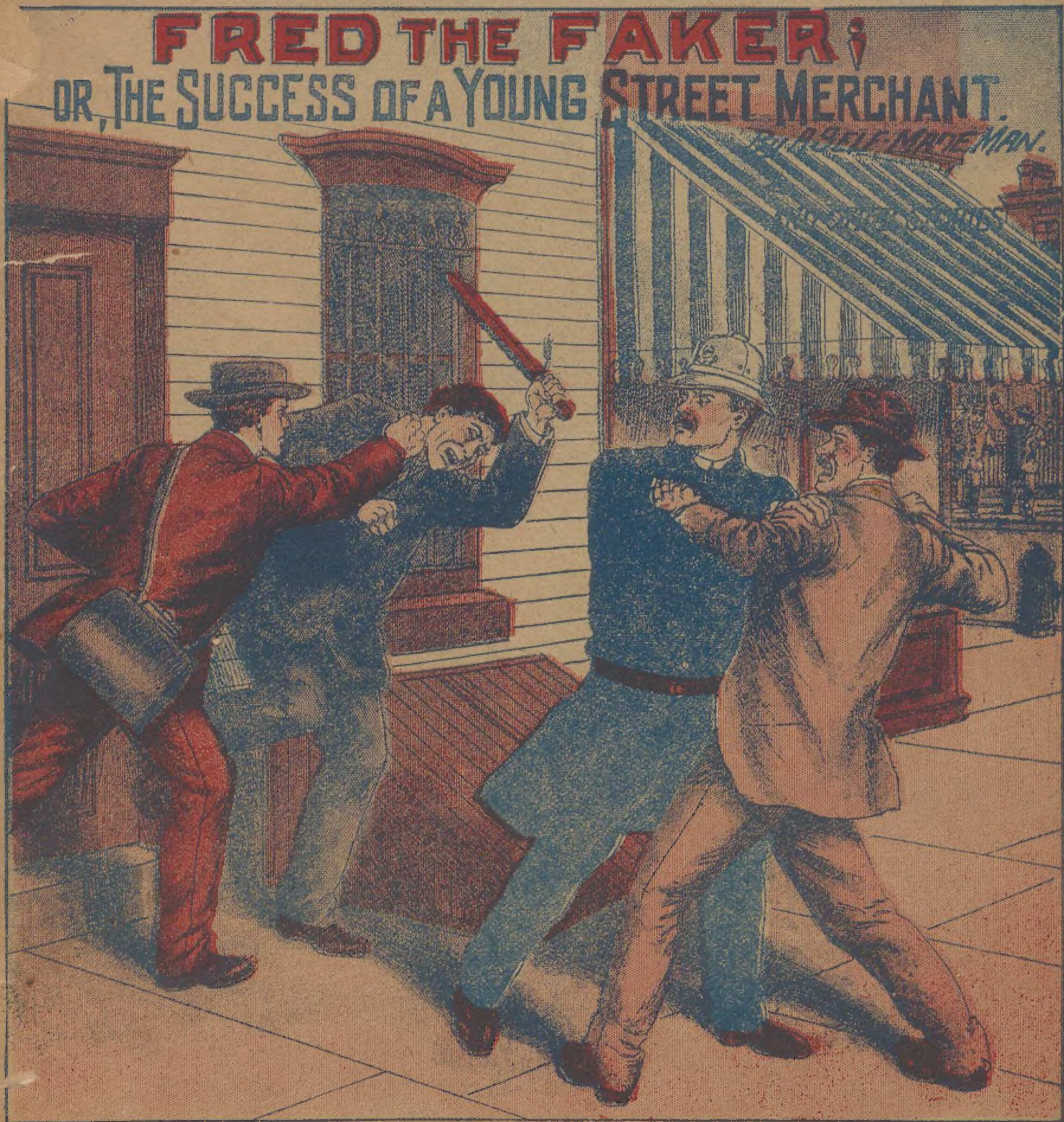


FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

FRED THE FAKER; OR, THE SUCCESS OF A YOUNG STREET MERCHANT.

A SELF-MADE MAN.



As the policeman seized one of the toughs, the fellow's companion snatched his nightstick from his side, and raised it to hit the officer. "Take that, you rascal!" cried Fred, starting forward and slugging the ruffian under the jaw.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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FRED THE FAKER

OR, THE SUCCESS OF A YOUNG STREET MERCHANT

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Bound for New York.

"So you're thinking' about goin' to New York, are you?" said Jake Harlow, eying a stalwart, bright-eyed lad of eighteen, known to everybody in the village of Chester, on the line of the Erie Canal, as Fred Fox.

"I've got over the thinking stage; I'm going," replied the boy in a resolute tone.

"Reachin' out for new fields to display your ability in," grinned Jake, who was skipper of the canal-boat Mary Ann, which had made fast to the wharf early that afternoon to take aboard a consignment of crated merchandise, the product of the village factory, the destination of which was New York.

"Well, it's about time I started out to make my own way in the world," replied the boy, watching the transfer of the crates from the wharf to the hold of the canal-boat with some interest; "and I don't know of any better place than New York to start at the foot of the ladder."

"I don't blame you wantin' to get out of this village. It's slower than molasses."

"It certainly offers no inducements for anyone who is ambitious to rise."

"You were born in this place I understand," said Captain Jake, refilling his pipe, lighting it, and then leaning negligently against a pile of crates.

"I was."

"Never been nowhere else, eh?"

"I've visited Buffalo, and stayed there long enough to get acquainted with the city, but I don't care a whole lot for it."

"When was that?"

"About two years ago, after my mother died. I might have stayed there only that my uncle sent for me when he met with the accident that laid him up for good."

"I see. Now he's dead and buried you're thrown out on the world to make your own livin'?"

The boy nodded.

"He didn't leave much of anythin', did he?"

"Not enough to pay his debts."

"He didn't own the cottage, then?"

"No; he rented it."

"And his creditors have levied on the furniture and so forth?"

"They have; but they don't expect to realize

enough out of the auction sale to meet more than a part of their claims."

"You helped keep the pot boilin', I reckon. The pension that the old man got from the Government wasn't enough to make ends meet."

"No, it paid the rent and helped along a little, that's all. I worked in Baxter's store, but Baxter didn't pay any more than he could help, so I quit there last night, having made up my mind to go down to New York."

"How did you expect to go—by rail to Albany and boat the rest of the way?"

"As I'm not very flush I intended to ride to Albany and try and work my way down on one of the boats."

"You might do better'n that if time ain't no object to you."

"How?"

"Work your way on my boat."

"I'll do it if you'll take me," replied the boy, eagerly.

"I'll take you as I'm short-handed, and be glad to do so, that is if Gunnion hasn't no objection."

"Who's Gunnion?"

"He's a passenger I'm takin' down to New York."

"What has he got to say about you hirin' a hand if you want one? You're the skipper."

"Well, you see, Gunnion has paid well for the use of the cabin," replied Captain Jake, in a hesitating tone, "and he might object to you bein' in there."

"Maybe I could sleep in the hold," suggested the boy.

"Not in the main hold for we keep the hatch on that, but there's a small place under the deck for'ard, where I keep odds and ends, sich as ropes and one thing or another. If you could make shift to put up with that—I could lend you a couple of blankets to lie on, and as the weather's warm you don't need much coverin'—why, maybe matters could be arranged."

"I'm willing to accommodate myself to circumstances. Beggars can't very well be choosers," smiled the boy, ruefully.

"Well, here comes Gunnion now. I'll speak to him about you," said the skipper, as a well-dressed, sharp-looking man of thirty stepped on the wharf.

Captain Jake sauntered over to the newcomer and spoke to him.

Gunnion listened and then looked at Fred, whom he sized up from head to foot.

At first he shook his head, as if he objected to the arrangement, which rather surprised the boy, as he didn't see how he had any right to question anything that the captain approved of in connection with the management of the boat.

Harlow, however, seemed to have made up his mind that he wanted Fred aboard, and after some argument, Gunnion yielded the point.

He came over and looked hard at the boy.

"See here, my lad," he said sharply, as if he were the skipper of the craft, "if you're going with Harlow you'll have to mind your P's and Q's, understand?"

"What do you mean by that?" asked Fred, surprised at his tone and manner, which did not seem to be in line with his standing on board the boat.

"I mean you must promise not to enter the cabin at any time, or under any circumstances. Your meals will be served to you on deck, and you'll sleep in the coop at the bows."

"If that is Captain Jake's orders of course I'll obey them; but I should imagine it was his place to tell me what I'm to do and what I'm not to do," replied the boy, in a sturdy tone. "He's the captain of the boat."

Gunnion was about to make some reply, when the skipper hastily stopped him.

"You ain't got no objection to that arrangement, Fred, have you?" he said.

"No. Whatever you say goes with me."

"Then we'll consider the matter as settled. You can get what traps you're goin' to take to New York and fetch 'em aboard, for we'll haul out at daylight in the mornin'. I'll give you your supper, and you can get used to your new bedroom before we start. It'll kind of break you in, and you'll be on hand when you're wanted."

The boy had no objection to falling in with the skipper's suggestion, and thanking Captain Jake for giving him the chance to get to the city free of expense, he left the wharf to bid some of his old friends good-by, and get his few personal possessions, which were already packed in one small trunk and ready for removal from his late uncle's cottage, now in charge of the auctioneer, who had advertised the sale of the deceased's effects for the next morning.

It was six o'clock and the sun was kissing the western horizon when Fred Fox returned to the wharf in a light wagon which bore his trunk.

The wharf was now clear of the crates, which had been stowed away in the hold of the canal-boat, and she looked all ready to take her departure at any time.

No one was visible on the boat, but smoke was issuing from the galley-chimney in the after part of the cabin deckhouse, so Fred concluded that he would find the skipper there.

The driver of the team helped him carry his trunk aboard and forward to the small square opening in the deck at the bows, which the boy understood was to be his quarters while he was on the canal-boat.

Gunnion heard the footsteps on deck and came out to see who had come aboard.

He stood watching while Fred was bidding

good-by to the driver, who was a boy friend of his.

"Want to see Harlow?" asked Gunnion.

"I'd like him to know that I've brought my trunk aboard, and that I'm ready to turn in and lend a hand from now till we reach New York," replied the boy.

"I'll report your arrival to him. He's getting supper and it won't be convenient for him to come out for a while. Sit down near the tiller, or anywhere you like on deck, and when the meal is served your share will be brought to you," said Gunnion, who then turned on his heel, and re-entered the cabin, leaving the door slightly open.

Through this opening Fred caught a limited view of the quarters of the skipper, which was ordinarily also the quarters of the "crew" as well.

In this instance the "crew," represented by Fred, was evidently barred out in deference to the wishes of the passenger.

Canal-boats in these progressive days are not usually sought by people as a mode of conveyance from place to place, particularly over such a long distance as from Buffalo, here Gunnion came aboard, to New York, which was his destination.

The Erie Canal itself is 363 miles long, from Lake Erie to Albany, and the slow-going boats take the best part of a week to traverse it.

In the early days of its usefulness light packet-boats, drawn by smart horses, covered the distance in three and a half days.

As railroads were then in their infancy it catered to local passenger traffic, but things were different now.

Just why Gunnion chose to avail himself of the canal-boat Mary Ann as a means of transit from Buffalo to New York was a matter that concerned only himself, and incidentally Captain Jake, as Harlow was usually addressed.

At any rate it was none of the "crew's" business, and Fred did not bother his head about it.

Neither did the boy worry himself about being shut out of the cabin, though he knew that all hands, as a rule, had the use of the place.

He was anxious to reach New York as cheaply as possible, for his cash was at a very low ebb, and he felt grateful to Skipper Harlow for giving him the chance to work his way.

On the whole he wouldn't have much work to do, for on the long tow down the Hudson from the basin in Albany he would have absolutely nothing to do but to kill time as best he could.

The only thing that gave Fred food for speculation was the authoritative manner of Gunnion, who acted more like captain than passenger.

"Maybe he's some near relative of the owner of the boat," thought the boy, as he gazed idly into the water that eddied about the huge rudder of the cumbersome craft. "That would account for Captain Jake letting him have so much to say, and perhaps explain his presence on board. In fact, he might even be the owner himself, for all I know."

As Fred gazed around on the familiar landscape that he was leaving, perhaps forever, a sensation of homesickness for the first time oppressed him.

He was almost tempted to back out of his arrangement with Harlow, and remain at Chester, in the hope that he might find something to do more satisfactory than clerking for a miserly old hulk like Baxter.

The feeling, however, was only transient.

The appearance of Captain Jake with a tray containing a bountiful repast of ham and eggs, coffee, fried potatoes, and bread and butter, changed the current of his thoughts, and the feeling did not attack him again.

CHAPTER II.—The Mended One Dollar Bill.

Twilight had settled down over the rural landscape by the time Fred finished his meal, and taking up the tray with the dishes on it, he went to the half-open cabin door.

Captain Jake was busy in the kitchen part of the deckhouse, and it was clear that, while the passenger was aboard at least, he performed the duties of cook, steward and man-of-all-work.

Fred was prepared to help him if he was called upon to do so, but remembering the imperative orders he had received from Gunnion, that he was not to enter the cabin under any circumstances, he stopped at the threshold and knocked.

Gunnion, who was smoking a fine meerschaum pipe inside, came to the door, and seeing the boy standing there with his load, relieved him of it and then offered him a package of cigarettes.

"Thank you, sir, I don't smoke," replied Fred.

Gunnion stared at him, but made no remark.

He shut the door as a hint for the "crew" to take himself off, and carried the tray of dishes to Captain Jake.

Fred went back to his seat near the big tiller, and amused himself watching the lights of his native village, and wondering when he would see his old friends and schoolmates again, now that he was launched upon the wide, wide world.

The night was warm and pleasant, the sky was studded with stars and a gentle breeze was blowing.

"I'll be miles away from here by this time tomorrow night," he said to himself. "And every day thereafter will take me further away till I reach the city of my dreams—New York, where I understand there is an opening for everybody who is able and willing to put his shoulder to the wheel."

At that point in his reflections the cabin-door opened and Gunnion came out.

"Your name is Fred Fox, I believe?" he said.

"Yes, sir," replied Fred.

"Lived the greater part of your life in the village, eh?"

Fred said he had.

"Who is this Baxter that Harlow says you worked for?"

"He keeps a kind of general store on Main Street."

"Worth money, isn't he?"

"I couldn't tell you, sir," replied Fred, surprised at the question.

"The people who know him think he's well off, don't they?"

As Fred had often heard people remark that old man Baxter was, in their opinion, mighty well fixed financially, he admitted that popular opinion placed Mr. Baxter in very comfortable circumstances.

"He has the reputation of being a miser, hasn't he?"

"Yes. He is about as close as they come. If he had paid me decent wages I wouldn't be in such a hurry to go to New York," replied Fred.

"What did you do at the store?"

"Waited on customers when I wasn't out taking orders and delivering goods."

"I suppose he never sent you to the bank to deposit money and checks for him? Attended to that himself. Afraid you might abscond with his funds."

"Oh, he didn't keep any bank account. He didn't have any confidence in them. He keeps his money in an old safe in his bedroom, and sleeps with a revolver under his pillow."

"Hum!" ejaculated Gunnion, knocking the ashes out of his pipe into the water and putting it in his pocket. "Did you board with him?"

"No, I lived with my uncle. He died about a week ago, and that's why I am pulling up stakes and making for the city."

"When did you leave Baxter?"

"Last night."

"Got a new boy, I suppose, by this time?"

"I couldn't tell you; but I guess he had to hire somebody to go for the orders and deliver to-day. He couldn't do that himself without locking up the store, and that would hardly pay him."

"He has somebody to keep house for him, hasn't he?"

"Yes, an old woman who comes in the morning and goes away at night after her work is done."

"Then he's all alone in the house at night?"

"As far as I know he is."

"I suppose he stayed up in the store after you went home to count his cash receipts and make up his books?"

"Yes, he always did that before he went to bed," replied Fred, wondering at the curiosity shown by Gunnion concerning old man Baxter.

"How late does he keep his store open?"

"Till nine o'clock. That was one reason I objected to staying with him. All the other stores were closed at eight, but he hung out for stray customers who knew they could get things at his place when they couldn't at any other store."

"Would you do me a favor?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'd like a half-pound package of good smoking tobacco, Durham preferred. Will you go up to Baxter's store and get it for me?"

"Certainly, if you want me to."

"Here's the money to pay for it," and Gunnion handed the boy a bill.

As soon as Fred left the canal-boat Gunnion called to Captain Jake, who was walking the deck smoking his after-supper pipe, and the two engaged in an earnest conversation, carried on in low tones.

Fred was rather pleased at the chance of walking through the familiar streets of the village once more, though at that hour, a little after eight, there was small chance of meeting with any of his friends.

A walk of ten minutes brought him to Baxter's general store.

It was a weather-beaten two-story frame structure, owned by the old man, much in need of repair and particularly a fresh coat of paint.

The two windows were lighted by oil lamps that shed a dim radiance over a miscellaneous assort-

ment of goods, and one side of the double door was open.

Baxter was alone in his store, making up his customers' accounts at a small desk at the further end of the room. He looked up when Fred entered and came forward to wait on the visitor.

"Oh, it's you," he said, stopping. "What do you want?"

His tone and manner was most ungracious. In fact he was sore for Fred's leaving him, as it would be a difficult matter to hire an equally capable boy at the same low wages he paid his late clerk.

"I want a half pound of Durham tobacco, Mr. Baxter," replied Fred.

"Taken to smokin', have you?" growled the storekeeper.

"No; this is for a gentleman who asked me to buy it for him."

"Humph!" ejaculated Baxter, turning to the shelf where he kept his supply of tobacco.

He handed it to Fred and the boy gave him the bill. The old man looked at the bill carefully, as was his habit, for he was always afraid somebody would pass a counterfeit on him—a circumstance which happened to him several times in the course of his long career as a storekeeper. His sharp eyes noted the fact that the bill had been torn and pasted together again, and he rather objected to accepting mutilated currency. The bill had been mended very neatly so that the tear hardly showed on its face; but on the back the strip of tissue paper was plainly discernible. Across the paper somebody, possibly the person who repaired the bill, had impressed his name and business address with a rubber stamp. It read:

"John Robbins, 172 Blank Street, Buffalo."

"Hold on, Fox, I don't know as I want to take this bill," said Baxter.

"Why not? It's good, isn't it?"

"I guess it's good enough, but it's been mended."

"What of it?" said Fred, taking up the bill the old man had laid on the counter, and looking at it.

He saw the rubber type impression and read it.

"I guess that's the man who mended the bill. He stamped it as a guarantee that it was good. That's the way it looks to me."

"Hain't you got some other money?" asked Baxter.

"Only a few dollars of my own money, and I couldn't get at them now," replied the boy. "If you won't take the bill I'll have to go back without the tobacco."

Baxter didn't want to lose a sale, and was satisfied that the bill was good, so he consented to take it, and counted out the change.

"Maybe I'll send it back to the man who stamped it," said the storekeeper, as he put it in his till.

As that would cost him a matter of ten cents for postage and registry charges, Fred rather doubted his doing it. He judged that the old man would pass it on some customer next day.

"I s'pose you ain't got another job yet?" said Baxter, saying Fred with a glint of satisfaction in his eyes

"No, sir; I'm going to leave town in the morning."

"Leave town, eh? Where are you goin'?" asked the old man, curiously.

"New York."

"What are you goin' to do there?"

"Earn a living of course."

"Humph! You could do that here just as well, but boys are never satisfied to stay in the country. If you hain't ruined in New York afore you're there a year you can thank your stars," said the old man. "A big city is the worst place in the world for a country boy to go to."

"I'm old enough to look out for myself."

"You think you are, but you ain't. Well, it ain't nothin' to me. You had a good job with me, but you didn't appreciate it. Some day you'll wish you were back. See if you don't," and Mr. Baxter wagged his gray head with solemn conviction.

"Well, good-by, Mr. Baxter. I hope we part good friends," said Fred.

"I don't wish you no harm, but I'm thinkin' you're doin' a foolish thing to go to New York. You're takin' great chances."

The storekeeper went back to his desk to resume his work while Fred started back toward the canal-boat.

CHAPTER III.—The Mended Bill Turns up Again.

Gunnion and Captain Jake were pacing the deck together when Fred stepped on board the boat.

"Here's the tobacco, Mr. Gunnion, and here's your change," he said.

"Thanks, young man. You can keep the change," replied the passenger, putting the bag of tobacco in his pocket.

"Better turn in early, Fred," said Captain Jake, "for I'm goin' to call you at sunrise."

"All right. I'll turn in now, as it is nearly nine o'clock."

"I'll fetch you a pair of blankets and a spare mattress, and help you get your trunk below," said the skipper.

The blankets and mattress soon appeared, and the captain handed Fred a lantern and told him to jump down and look at his sleeping quarters.

"Many a chap has worse in this world," remarked Captain Jake.

Fred agreed with him, though the place was far from being as comfortable as the room he occupied at his late Uncle's cottage. There was hardly room to spread out the mattress, but he found he could adjust it good enough to sleep on. He shoved his trunk into a spare corner and then blowing out the light, rolled himself up in his blankets, and, with the stars peeping down at him through the opening above, he soon went to sleep. Fred was a good sleeper, and when he turned in at night he seldom woke up before his accustomed hour for rising. On this particular night something aroused him a little after midnight and he sat bolt upright, rather confused by his strange surroundings. In a moment or two, however, he recollected where he was, and, after wondering what time it was, he started to lie

down and resume his interrupted night's rest, when he heard footsteps on the wharf approaching the boat. Curious to learn who the visitor could be at that late hour, for he judged that it must be late, he poked his head out of the opening and looked over the wharf. A man was in the act of stepping aboard the boat. He carried a gripsack in one hand and a bag, apparently well filled in the other. At the same moment another man, whom Fred recognized as Captain Jake, appeared from the cabin with a lantern in his hand. When the light flashed on the man with the gripsack and bag, Fred saw that it was Gunnion.

"I see you've made the haul," said the skipper.

"Yes. It was the easiest job I ever did," replied Gunnion, with a laugh.

The two men then went into the cabin and closed the door after them. Fred remained looking aft for some minutes after they disappeared. He was puzzled about what he had seen and heard. He wondered what Gunnion had brought aboard in the gripsack and the bag. It seemed odd that he, a passenger from Buffalo, should go ashore at the village and return at such an hour of the night so heavily loaded. What had he bought, and where did he get it? It could hardly be anything he had purchased at a store, as most of the stores closed at eight, and none kept open much after nine. Then Captain Jake's words: "I see you've made a haul," and Gunnion's reply: "It was the easiest job I ever did," struck him as being very singular.

Although he cudgled his brains he could find no solution to the mystery, and so, feeling sleepy, he gave it up and returned to his mattress. After lying down he made another attempt to get to the bottom of the matter, but in the midst of his reflections he fell fast asleep and did not wake again until Captain Jake shook him into wakefulness and the knowledge that another day had come, for the early morning sun was shining on the combings of the little hatch.

"All right, Captain Jake, I'll come on deck right away," he said.

When he reported at the door of the cabin the skipper told him that breakfast would be ready in a few minutes and that he could sit down and wait for it. While he was waiting a boy made his appearance with a stout mule equipped with a towing harness. He tied the mule to a post close to the water-side and came aboard and reported to Captain Jake. Breakfast of bacon and eggs, with bread and coffee, was presently served to Fred and the boy on deck, and they got acquainted over the meal. As soon as they had finished, Fred helped the lad with the tow line, and then assisted Captain Jake to unmoor the canal-boat. In a short time the slow-going craft was under way, the mule tugging at the line in a lusty fashion, as if accustomed to the work, with the boy at his heels, urging him along with sundry shouts and the cracking of a whip. Fred, having nothing more to do for the present, seated himself at the bows and began to enjoy the novelty of his position. Captain Jake took charge of the tiller. After a while the skipper called Fred aft and instructed him how to steer the craft. As soon as he got the hang of the job the skipper left him in charge of the tiller and went into the cabin. After that he came on deck

at intervals, looked around and retired again. Several hours passed, and the sun was well up in the heavens, before Gunnion made his appearance with his pipe in his mouth. He nodded to Fred and then began pacing the deck in the sunshine, apparently at peace with himself and the world. Dinner was ready at half past twelve and the boat came to a halt so that the mule, not the same one they had started with, could take a rest and he and the boy get their dinner. Of course Fred had his dinner at the same time, and when the boat started once more he resumed his place at the tiller. It was almost sundown when they hauled into the basin at Rome, where they were to lay up for the night. As soon as they were moored Fred began taking in the waterside sights of the town, all of which were new to him. Supper over Fred asked Captain Jake if he could go ashore and see the place.

"Sure you can, Fred. Here's a dollar to pay your way into a show if you want to go, and if you don't you can spend it in any way you choose, or save it if you prefer to do that."

This liberality on the skipper's part rather surprised the boy, but he accepted the money and thanked the captain. Captain Jake said it didn't make any difference when he got back, but advised him not to stay away later than he could help, as he had to get up early to steer the boat when she got under way again. He gave Fred sundry directions so that he would be able to find the boat easily when he got back to the basin, and the boy went ashore. He walked up and down the principal business streets, then, buying the evening paper, stepped into a cheap restaurant to read it, calling for a cup of coffee and a plate of crullers, though he was not at all hungry. He sipped the coffee, munched the crullers, and feasted his eyes on the news. Suddenly his attention was attracted by the story of a daring night robbery reported from the village of Chester. When he saw that the crime had been perpetrated in his native place he was interested at once. He was still more interested when he discovered that his late employer, Mr. Baxter, was the victim of the outrage. He devoured the account with great eagerness, for a robbery of any importance in Chester village was something out of the usual. The story put him in possession of the following facts:

Mr. Baxter retired to bed at his customary hour the night before, after seeing that the doors were bolted at both ends of the store, and all the windows locked. A little before midnight he was awakened by a noise and saw a masked man in his room. There could be no doubt as to the intruder's character and intentions. The storekeeper realized that his unwelcome and unbidden visitor was a burglar, and he reached for the revolver he kept under his pillow in order to defend his money and other valuables locked up in the safe in his room. To his consternation he found that the weapon had been removed. When the burglar saw that he was awake he sprang at him, bound and gagged him. Thus rendered helpless the old man was forced to lie in bed and watch the rascal open his safe and take out all of his savings of years, which amounted to a considerable sum. The fellow shoved the bundles of bills into a gripsack he had brought with him,

and made a bundle of a lot of other things he picked up about the room. Then he departed, leaving the old man gagged and bound in bed. When the old woman housekeeper appeared at seven next morning, she was somewhat surprised to see no signs of Baxter about. He seldom failed to have the store open at half-past six, and she always found the fire in the stove started ready for her, and the kettle boiling. She jumped to the conclusion that he might have been taken ill during the night, and she went to the door of his room to knock. She noticed that the door was partly open, and looking into the room was astonished to see Mr. Baxter bound and gagged on the bed. Getting a knife, she cut him loose, and then the storekeeper tried out that he had been robbed the night before, and pointing his trembling finger at the open safe. He hurried into his clothes and rushed off to the head constable's house to tell him about the outrage. He described the burglar as a man of average build, and he thought he might be anywhere from twenty-five to thirty-five years of age. He had worn a black mask that completely covered his face, so Baxter was doubtful if he could identify him if he saw him again without it. That was the story Fred read in the Rome afternoon paper, and it astonished him not a little. It set him thinking, too. He remembered waking up the night before and seeing Gunnion come aboard the canal-boat at a late hour with a gripsack and a bag full of something. Then the words Captain Jake had addressed to him about his making a haul, and Gunnion's reply that it was the easiest job he had ever done, occurred to the boy. And now here was the account of Baxter having been robbed the night before. What Fred had seen and heard seemed particularly significant in the light of the old man's statement that the burglar appeared to be a man between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age, and that he carried his plunder away in a bag and a gripsack. The boy hated to give expression to his thoughts. It looked to him as if Gunnion was the burglar and Captain Jake his accomplice. He had known Harlow, in a general way, for more than a year, and knew nothing bad of him, but that was not saying but the skipper might be crooked on the quiet. In view of the present circumstances his opinion of Captain Jake began to undergo a change.

"I really believe he and Gunnion are hand-in-glove, and Gunnion appears to be the boss, otherwise he wouldn't have so much to say aboard. I also suspect that the real reason why I'm barred out of the cabin is because it is the hiding-place for the plunder Gunnion has picked up in Buffalo and elsewhere. He is taking it down to New York to dispose of—that is if my suspicions are really founded on fact. The question is, ought I go to the police and tell them what I believe to be the truth, or wait till I get further evidence against Gunnion and Captain Jake? There is a bare possibility that I may be wrong in connecting these men with the burglary of Nathan Baxter's house. If the police were to arrest Gunnion and Captain Jake on the strength of my statement and it should turn out that it was a mere coincidence Gunnion came aboard at a late hour at Chester with a gripsack and a bag, and

the men were innocent of any crooked work, it would place me in a pretty bad light. The police would not thank me for putting them on to a mare's nest, while Captain Jake would never forgive me, and Gunnion would be as mad as a hornet. The result would be I'd have to quit the boat right here, and pay my way to Albany, and I should feel pretty mean over the mistake I had committed."

Fred turned the matter over in his mind and decided to go slow.

It would take several days for the boat to reach Albany, and during that time he might be able to discover something definite. Having come to that decision he got up and went to the counter to pay for his coffee and crullers. He laid the bill Captain Jake had given him on the counter, and waited for the proprietor, who had gone to the back of the room, to come forward and hand him his change. As he stood there he suddenly noticed that the bill was a mended one, and it was very like the one he had paid to Baxter the preceding evening for the tobacco. He took it up and examined it. Then he saw the rubber stamp across the piece of tissue paper with which the note had been repaired. His heart gave a jump and he looked narrowly at the stamp. It read "John Robbins, No. 172 Blank Street, Buffalo."

It was the identical note he had given Nathan Baxter. If he needed further evidence of the fact there was the red-ink blot he had noticed on one side of the paper. How had that note come into Captain Jake's possession? The answer seemed plain—Gunnion was the burglar, and it was through him that the skipper got hold of the mended note.

CHAPTER IV.—Caught.

It instantly struck Fred that the one-dollar bill was an excellent clue to the perpetrator of the robbery. He could swear he had paid it over to Nathan Baxter a few hours before the crime was committed, and Baxter could not fail to remember receiving it from Fred, for he had objected at first to taking it, and they had some talk about it. Now Fred could swear that he got it from Captain Jake, inside of twenty-four hours after the burglary, therefore it was up to the skipper to explain how it had come into his possession.

He must have received it from Gunnion, as Captain Jake had not been off the boat all day, and Gunnion seemed to be the only man he had come into contact with between the departure of the boat from Chester and her arrival at Rome.

Clearly this mended bill was another link, and a very important one, connecting Gunnion with the robbery, and Captain Jake with a knowledge of the crime.

Fred returned the bill to his pocket and, pulling out some loose change, paid the restaurant keeper and left the place.

"I'm satisfied that Gunnion is a crook and not an honest passenger," the boy said to himself as he walked along. "I think I can't make a mistake in taking that dollar bill to the police and explaining why I am sure it is part of the swag taken from Nathan Baxter's house that night."

As he looked around to see if there was a policeman in sight who could direct him how to find the station-house, he was surprised to see Gunnion and Captain Jake coming up the street.

While he was looking at them they turned into a saloon. The fact that both Gunnion and the skipper were away from the canal-boat put a bold idea into Fred's head, and altered the plan he was about to carry out.

Here was a chance for him to return to the boat and try to get into the cabin in order to see if he could get positive evidence against the men. He was sure that the robbery of Baxter's house was not the only crime of its kind that Gunnion had committed, consequently he felt certain that the cabin was the secret repository of a considerable amount of plunder. The money part had, no doubt, been divided between the men—the fact that he had received the tell-tale mended bill from Captain Jake was pretty satisfactory evidence of that fact; but the rest of the swag that Gunnion had accumulated was doubtless hidden somewhere in the cabin, and by locating it Fred felt he would have the case clinched against the crook and his accomplice.

He started at once for the basin as fast as he could go, as he could not tell when Gunnion and Captain Jake would return, and he didn't think it would be healthy for him if they caught him in the cabin.

He had no difficulty in finding the deserted Mary Ann, which lay moored on the outside of two other canal-boats.

As soon as he got aboard he tried the cabin door, and, as he expected, found it locked. There were two small windows, one on either side of the deckhouse. He tried the one facing out on the canal, and, to his satisfaction, discovered that, through some oversight, it was not secured by the catch on the inside. It worked on two hinges and opened inward. It was rather a narrow opening to force entrance through, but still it was possible for a boy of Fred's make-up to accomplish the feat.

In a few minutes he was standing in the cabin. The first thing he did was to shove a stool under the window to assist his exit when he was ready to leave, or when he heard sounds that indicated the return of the two men. In the latter event it would be necessary for him to pile out in a hurry in order to avoid detection.

Having provided for his retreat, he proceeded to inspect the cabin. There were two bunks on either side, one above the other, and underneath the lower ones a good-sized locker. Fred found they were both locked. Here was a big disappointment to begin with, for he suspected that the plunder was concealed in them. However, he continued his investigations, but without result. The matter narrowed itself down to the two lockers. If the plunder was aboard it was there, under lock and key, and Fred couldn't see how he was going to get a peek into them.

While he was considering the matter, he suddenly noticed a small key on the floor, midway between the bunks and the door. He never would have noticed it only it was very bright and a gleam from the turned-down lamp was reflected from its polished surface.

Fred swooped down on it, like a hawk after a barnyard fowl, and a moment later he was trying it in the keyhole of one of the lockers. It

fitted perfectly and he opened the locker and looked in. It seemed to be full of clothes.

"Pshaw!" ejaculated the boy. "There is no swag in this locker."

As he started to close the locker it occurred to him to look under the garments and see if there was anything beneath them. He turned up the lamp, and proceeded to probe the contents of the box. Pushing his hand down it soon came in contact with something hard. Fred lifted the end of the clothes and looked down. Two handsome silver cups met his gaze. He sprang up and looked out of the window facing the direction Captain Jake and Gunnion would have to take to come off to the boat. All was quiet on board of the inner canal-boats, and there was no sign of the two men in the distance.

Leaving the window partly open he returned to the locker and pulled all the clothes out of it. The sight of valuable household articles, mostly of pure silver, that met his view, almost staggered him. It looked like plunder from the house of some wealthy person. In one corner was an elegant box made of rosewood and inlaid with diamonds and other shaped patches of pure silver. On the center one was engraved the word "Ruth." A small steel key was in it. Fred pulled the box out and opened it. He was fairly dazzled by the display of expensive bits of jewelry that lay inside of it, every one covered with diamonds, rubies, pearls, and other stones of the first water.

"My gracious!" exclaimed the excited boy. "The contents of this box must represent a small fortune. Gunnion will be able to sell these things for enough to make both him and Captain Jake independent for life, not to speak of the silverware and other articles in this locker, that is if I don't put a spoke in his wheel, which I certainly intend doing right away."

Fred was so taken up with the discovery he had made, that he forgot the passage of time. Suddenly he was startled by the rattle of a key in the cabin door. Before he could move, the door was thrown open, and Gunnion walked in, followed by Captain Harlow.

Fred was fairly caught, and could only stare in consternation at the two men.

CHAPTER V.—Turning the Tables.

"So," said Gunnion, with a black look, "it's you who are in here, and nosing into matters that don't concern you. Well, I fancy you won't live long enough to report what you've seen."

Gunnion and Captain Jake were not surprised at finding the cabin occupied by an intruder. The half-open window, and the light turned up, had prepared them to meet with someone who had no right to be inside their quarters.

They had come aboard noiselessly, and Gunnion had peered through the window cautiously to see who was inside, but he was unable to catch more than an outline of Fred's back, and that gave him no information. Their general impression was that some river-thief was going through the cabin and they intended to make matters pretty hot for him.

When Gunnion recognized the boy of the boat, who had been strictly enjoined to keep out of the cabin, and saw that he had opened the locker that

contained the results of a successful Buffalo robbery, his feeling of rage may be better imagined than described.

He saw at a glance that Fred had surreptitiously possessed himself of knowledge which could not be otherwise than fatal to the interests of himself and his companion. He had sized the lad up during the short time they had been in each other's company, and he knew that Fred was a thoroughly honest boy, and could not be bribed. Therefore, now that the lad had them where the hair was short, there was only one way to deal with him, and that was to do him up for good at once. Gunnion was a man who never hesitated after he had once made up his mind on anything, and having decided Fred's fate, he proceeded to put his purpose into execution. Fred dropped the box containing the jewelry and sprang to his feet. He realized from Gunnion's look that he was face to face with a serious predicament.

"You dare not injure me, Mr. Gunnion," he said, desperately.

"Dare not, eh?" and the rascal uttered a short, wicked laugh, which, more even than his words, made the boy feel that he was not a man to be played with. "You don't know me, young man. I ordered you not to enter this cabin under any circumstances. You have not only disobeyed my orders, but you have gone snooping around to see what you could find. Well, you've found out too much altogether for my safety, as well as Harlow's, and you must pay the piper. It is fortunate that we returned so soon, otherwise, I'm thinking, when we did return we'd have found the police waiting for us. When a chap looks for trouble he generally finds it. At any rate you've found all you'll ever find in this world."

"You wouldn't kill the boy, Gunnion," said Captain Jake, who was clearly opposed to such a proceeding.

"I wouldn't, eh? That's just what we've got to do with him," replied the crook. "Dead boys tell no tales."

"I won't have anything to do with such a thing," cried the skipper.

"Why, you white-livered cur, do you want to go to the State prison for fifteen or twenty years?"

"No; but I won't stand for bloodshed. That's a hanging matter if it should be brought against us."

"I don't intend that it shall be brought against us. I don't do business in a bungling way. That boy has got us where the shoe pinches. If we give him the least chance he'll jail us as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow. So you see it's his life against our safety. What's the life of a man or boy more than that of a boat? You want the sheep, or the bullock, or the fowl, for your pleasure, and you kill, that's all. If the life of a man or a boy stands between you and a long sentence that would eat up the best part of your life, why, you'd kill him, too."

"No, I wouldn't. I'd never know an easy moment afterward if I did."

"Bah! Where's your pluck? You'll have to pull yourself together for we're in the same boat and must swim or sink together. This boy must take the consequences of his folly in butting in where he had no business to venture."

"His death isn't necessary to our safety. We can make a prisoner of him and keep him below

in the hold till we reach the city. Then we can escape with the stuff before he can get the chance to put the police on us," said Captain Jake.

"That's all very pretty; but suppose he should escape from the hold, where would we be?"

"I'll see to it that he doesn't escape," said the skipper.

"Your word isn't enough assurance for me," replied Gunnion.

"It's utterly impossible for him to get out of the hold after the hatch is clapped over his head."

"Do you mean the main hold?"

"No; I mean the small hold for'ard, where he slept last night."

Gunnion considered the skipper's proposition for a moment or two. It seemed clear that if he agreed to it it would be somewhat against his will. In the meantime Fred had been thinking pretty rapidly while he watched the two men discussing his fate. He entertained a strong objection to being put out of the way, or even held a prisoner under hatches. He glanced at the two windows, but he could not make his escape through either with his enemies standing within a yard of him. It looked as if there was no possible way by which he could elude his enemies. Suddenly his eyes lighted on a revolver lying on a shelf within easy reach. Without a moment's hesitation he extended his hand and seized it. Gunnion uttered an imprecation and started for him, but Fred cocked the weapon in a twinkling and covered him.

"Now, Mr. Gunnion, kindly seat yourself on that bunk," said the boy, resolutely.

"Why, you young——"

"That will do, sir. I am the master of the situation now, and will pass upon your finish just as you and Captain Jake passed upon mine a few minutes ago."

"You dare not shoot," said Gunnion, showing a distaste for a pointed revolver.

"Dare not, eh?" replied Fred. "I might remark, as you did to me a few minutes ago, that you don't know me, Mr. Gunnion. The law is on my side, as you are a professional crook, and Captain Jake has got into a hole by sacrificing his honesty in order to make easy money. If I shot a man of your stamp in an effort to get away from your clutches, the law would look on it as an act of self-defense. Now if you have any regard for yourself, and don't want me to fill you full of bullets, just do as I order you to."

"I'll get even with you for this," said Gunnion, darkly, as he sat on the bunk.

"Maybe you will, and maybe you won't," replied Fred. "The best place for dangerous crooks like you is in jail, and I intend to put you there if I can."

Gunnion favored the plucky boy with a look which said as plain as anything that it would go hard with the boy if he ever got his hands on him.

"Now, Captain Jake," continued Fred, "take your seat beside your passenger. I should feel very sorry if I was obliged to pump any lead into you, because we've been acquainted for many months, and never till now did I know anything against you; but self-preservation is the first law of nature, and I must take advantage of the chance that fortune has put in my way."

Captain Jake seemed cowed and disheartened,

without the least show of resistance he seated himself beside his associate in guilt.

Although Fred had the upper hand of the two men it was a serious problem how he could maintain his advantage. He could see by the expression of Gunnion's eye that the rascal was meditating some plan for reversing the situation, and fear the man would make a successful move, Fred backed well toward the door, holding the revolver in readiness for instant action.

The only way he could secure the men was to lock them in the cabin, which he could easily do as Gunnion had left the key in the lock outside.

This, however, would leave the men at liberty with a window on either side of the cabin to utilize for their escape. While it was almost impossible for the broad-shouldered Harlow to make use of either of them with any degree of success, it was different with Gunnion, who was slender, light and active, and it would be impossible for Fred to keep his eyes on both windows at once.

Besides there was a third window in the kitchen, looking forward, which, though smaller than the others, might possibly afford the crook a means of escape.

The only way that the boy could hold the men was to remain at the cabin door and keep them under his eye. That meant an all-night watch unless he could attract attention to the boat by firing his revolver in the air. Such a plan seemed feasible, as the night was comparatively still, and a couple of shots fired in rapid succession was almost certain to attract notice and bring a policeman on the scene to find out what was in the wind.

Fred concluded to try it, but before doing so he thought it advisable to recover the box of gems, lest Gunnion should find a chance to toss it out through one of the windows into the canal in order to destroy a part of the evidence against him.

But to secure it he would have to return within reaching distance of the rascal, and that was rather dangerous, for in stooping down to pick it up he would offer himself as a mark for the moment to Gunnion, who was certain to try and avail himself of the chance to down his captor, and Fred felt that if the scoundrel ever got the gun away from him he would kill him with as little compunction as he might a dog. He concluded to risk it. Noting the place where the casket lay, he approached it, keeping his eye and the revolver on Gunnion. Reaching it, he stooped suddenly and grabbed it. It seemed as if the rascal knew what his purpose was, for the moment he went down Gunnion sprang at him.

Crack! With a cry Gunnion fell forward beside the boy, clutching his side with one hand where the bullet hit him. Had Captain Jake followed his companion he would have stood a good chance of downing Fred before he could have recocked his weapon. He made no attempt to do so, not being built of the same stuff as his associate in crime.

As Gunnion after a struggle became unconscious, Fred picked up the box and retreated to the door.

CHAPTER VI.—Fred Does Captain Jake a Good Turn.

Fred hoped that the report of the revolver would bring somebody from the next boat on the scene, so he opened the cabin door. Captain Jake's non-resistance and dejected appearance made the boy feel sorry for him.

"You see the game is about up, Captain Jake," he said.

"I didn't think you'd turn on me this way, Fred."

"I'm sorry that my duty compels me to treat you without gloves, but you oughtn't have gone wrong. How came you to get mixed up with this man Gunnion, who is clearly a professional crook?"

"Because he was a smooth talker, and I was weak enough to yield to temptation. I suppose this is my finish," he added, gloomily. "I'll get a long term for helping Gunnion to take his swag to New York."

"Look here, Captain Jake, how much of the money which Gunnion stole from Nathan Baxter have you got in your possession?" asked Fred.

The skipper looked at the boy in surprise.

"How did you know that Gunnion robbed Baxter?"

"Because the story is in the Rome evening paper tonight."

"It is? And are the police after Gunnion?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Then how do you know that Gunnion had anything to do with the burglary?"

"I have positive evidence of the fact."

"What is it?"

"A dollar bill."

"A dollar bill!"

"Yes; a mended one that I know was in Baxter's possession at the time he was robbed. Gunnion brought it aboard the boat with the rest of his plunder."

"How do you know that he did?"

"Because I received it from you tonight."

"From me?"

"Yes. You remember giving me a dollar to spend when I left the boat, don't you?"

Captain Jake recalled the circumstance and admitted it.

"You noticed that it was a mended bill, didn't you?"

The skipper had, and that was the reason he had been so liberal with the boy.

"Well, that bill, in connection with the newspaper story, and something else I saw and heard at Chester on the night of the robbery, convinced me that Gunnion was the burglar and that you were his accomplice."

"You're sharper than I ever believed," said the captain, regretfully.

"I'm sharp enough to see through a mill-stone when there's a big hole in it. Now I wish you no harm, Captain Jake, and I am not anxious to see you jailed, tried and sent to prison for a long term, as you surely will be the moment the police get their clutches on you."

"How am I going to help myself? You won't let me get away."

"Yes, I will, on condition that you come up with all the stolen money and other booty you have in your possession."

"Do you mean that?" asked Captain Jake, eagerly.

"I do, provided that no one turns up here before you can get away. I have no right to offer you this chance, and if the fact should be found out I'd be hauled over the coals for it by the authorities; but as I feel sorry for your situation, I'll take a chance. Put everything that does not belong to you on that bunk, then pack your grip and get away from the boat. The moment you are gone I shall rouse up the people in the next boat and send for the police."

"It's kind of you to give me a show. I won't forget it," replied the skipper, in an unsteady tone.

"You'd better get out of the State as quick as you can, for I can't conceal the fact that you were Gunnion's accomplice in a general way. The facts have got to come out, and detectives will be sent out to look for you."

Captain Jake got up and pulled a wad of bills from his pocket.

"There is all the stolen property I ever received from Gunnion," he said, laying it on the bunk. "I have some more money, but it's my own."

"All right; I'll take your word for it. Now pack your grip and get away. Remember if you're caught I'll have to testify against you," said Fred.

Captain Jake hastened to do it, mighty glad of the chance to escape the consequences of his folly in taking up with the crook.

"Good-by, Fred," said the skipper, when he was ready to go. "I'm tired of canal-boating anyway. That's why I fell in so easily with Gunnion, who showed me how I could make a good thing of it takin' him down to the city with his swag. The robbery of old man Baxter was merely a side issue. He pumped you for information, and what you told him encouraged him to attempt the trick, which he pulled off without much trouble. He got about \$6,000 in money out of the old man's safe, and he gave me \$1,000 of it. There it is on the bunk. The rest you'll find on him. The other stuff he stole from Baxter you'll find in this locker."

Fred declined to shake hands with Captain Jake, as he wasn't taking any chances and said so, and so the skipper of the canal-boat Mary Ann became a skipper in another sense, and was shortly out of sight.

The boy waited a reasonable time to give him a start before arousing the captain of the neighboring boat.

It was now after eleven, and Gunnion still lay unconscious on the floor of the cabin.

Fred didn't think he was entitled to much consideration, as he believed the man would have tried to put him out of the way for good had not Captain Jake made such a vigorous objection.

It was largely gratitude for the captain's intervention in his behalf that induced Fred to connive at his escape before the police were summoned on the scene.

At last the boy decided to wait no longer, so he went on board the next boat and knocked loudly at the cabin door.

"Who's there?" asked a gruff voice.

"A boy from the Mary Ann alongside of you," replied Fred.

"What do you want?"

"I want you to come outside. There's trouble on the Mary Ann."

"What kind of trouble?" asked the captain, opening the door a little.

"I've shot a crook aboard of her."

"The dickens you have. Where is Cap'n Jake?"

"Skipped out."

"Skipped out! What do you mean?"

"He's gone to avoid arrest."

"Why, what did he do?" asked the captain, in some surprise.

"I can't explain now, as I want you to go for a doctor and the police at once. The wounded man may die if he isn't attended to."

"I'll be right out; but why don't you go for a doctor yourself?"

"I'm a stranger in Rome and wouldn't know where to find one. Besides, for important reasons, I can't leave the boat."

"I'll be with you in a few moments."

"You'll find me in the cabin of the Mary Ann."

Fred returned to the canal-boat, returned the casket and the clothes to the locker and locked it, putting the key in his pocket.

He then took charge of the money he received from Captain Jake and placed it in the opposite locked. He had some idea of relieving the senseless Gunnion of the money in his pockets, but on second thought considered it was better for the police to find it on his person. He was quite ready to receive the captain of the next boat when he appeared in about ten minutes.

Fred gave him a brief explanation of the situation, and the captain was much astonished to learn that Harlow had been in league with a professional crook.

He readily agreed to go for a doctor and the police, and then hurried off on his mission, leaving Fred in charge of the Mary Ann.

The captain brought a doctor and two policemen back with him. Gunnion was brought to his senses, and his wound, which was not a fatal one, was dressed. While the doctor was engaged with him, Fred put the policeman in possession of all the facts of the case, and showed them the valuable plunder in the lockers.

One of the officers took Fred with him to headquarters, leaving his companion in charge of the boat and the prisoner.

Fred repeated his story to the man in charge of the station-house, and produced the one dollar bill as evidence in the case of the Baxter robbery.

A wagon and several officers were sent to the canal-boat to fetch the prisoner and the plunder, Fred going with them. While they were away the officer at Headquarters communicated with the Buffalo police over the telephone, and learned that several important burglaries had been committed recently in that city, and that the perpetrators of only one of them had been caught.

Later on, after the plunder found on the canal-boat had been scheduled, a list of it was forwarded to the Buffalo police.

Fred was told that he would be detained as a witness unless he could get some responsible person to vouch for his appearance in court.

"I'm well known in Chester," he said. "In fact, I worked for Nathan Baxter, the old man who was robbed by Gunnion, up to a couple of days ago."

He explained that he was going to New York

to make a start in life, and Captain Harlow, who he said had made his escape in the confusion attending the shooting Gunnion, had offered to let him work his way to the city. He was locked up in a cell for the rest of the night, the officer telling him that the magistrate would decide what to do with him in the morning.

Early in the morning a telegram was sent to Nathan Baxter, requesting him to come to Rome and identify his stolen property, and he reached the station-house shortly after twelve o'clock.

He was taken into the chief's office, where he told the story of the burglary in substantially the same way it had appeared in the previous afternoon's paper. He brought a list of the things taken in addition to the \$6,000. He identified the various articles when shown the plunder. He was also told that his money had been recovered, too. Then he was asked if he knew Fred Fox, and replying in the affirmative, was informed that he owed the recovery of his property to the boy.

This rather astonished him, but though he was pleased to death to learn that he would ultimately get his money and things back, he did not express any desire to see Fred in order to thank him.

The examination of Gunnion was postponed until he recovered from his wound. As this would take time Fred was detained in Rome under the eye of the police. It was nearly three weeks before Gunnion was able to appear in court, and during that time detectives were out hunting for Captain Jake, and other means taken to capture him, but he eluded detection.

Fred's evidence was sufficient to cause the magistrate to hold the prisoner for trial.

It was shown that the silverware and jewelry, worth a matter of \$20,000, had been stolen from a wealthy Buffalo manufacturer. This gentleman came to Rome and identified his property. He thanked Fred for recovering it and promised to reward him after the conviction of the prisoner.

The boy, learning that he might be detained for a couple of months in Rome in the hands of the police, and not relishing such a thing, appealed to the manufacturer to secure his release. The gentleman immediately gave a bond for his appearance at the trial.

"Now I'll go on to New York," said Fred, in a tone of satisfaction.

"You must furnish the police with your address, so they can notify you to come here at the proper time," said the manufacturer.

"I'll have to send it to them," replied Fred, "for at present I haven't the least idea where I shall put up in the city."

"Why not come to Buffalo with me?" said the gentleman. "I will provide you with work in my factory."

"I am much obliged to you, sir, but I started to go to New York I'd prefer to go there. Should I not do well there I will find my way to Buffalo some way and look you up."

"All right," replied the manufacturer. "Here is my business card, and here is \$50 to help you along till I see you again."

That night Fred took a train for Albany, and next morning the day-boat down the river for New York

CHAPTER VII.—Aleck Brownson, Faker.

On the way down the river Fred struck up an acquaintance with a shrewd-looking young man of twenty-five years, and they soon got quite chummy.

"So you're on your way to New York to make a start, eh?" said his acquaintance.

"Yes. I've got to make a living, and I believe the city is the place to make it," replied the boy.

"You never said a truer word," said the other, whose name was Aleck Brownson, known among his associates as "Smart Aleck," clapping Fred on the back. "New York is the place. I've been all over the country, but little old New York is good enough for me every day in the week, Sunday included."

"I'm glad to hear that I'm making no mistake in going there," said Fred.

"What do you expect to turn your hand to?" asked his new friend.

"Anything that's honest and is worth tackling."

"Then I can put you on to the right thing, for you look to me as if you are smart."

"Can you?" cried Fred, eagerly. "That's kind of you."

"Don't mention it. You'd prefer to be your own boss, wouldn't you?"

"Yes; but there's not much chance of that for some time to come."

"That's where you're wrong. I've been my own boss ever since I started into the business."

"What business?" asked Fred, curiously.

"I'm a faker."

"What's that?"

"A street merchant."

"A street merchant!" exclaimed Fred.

"That's what I said. I'm a sort of general purveyor of catchy articles—the latest novelties, in fact. To go into the business all you require is a small cash capital."

"How much capital?"

"Five dollars will start you up."

"Five dollars!" ejaculated Fred, astonished at the smallest of the sum.

"Yes. It will cost you two dollars for your license, and the other three a deposit on the stock in trade you carry out."

"What kinds of goods shall I have to sell, and how will I sell them?"

"I could give you a list a foot long to choose from—cheap music, paper covered fiction that has had its day and comes under the head of literary junk, all grades of mechanical toys, a new puzzle that everybody is aching to try his hand at, cheap labor-saving household devices, novelties of every kind in fact, and so on. Your field of action is the curb, and the public your customers whom you largely catch on the wing, as it were, for your license gives you no rights that the cop on the beat is bound to respect. You must keep on the move when you see a guardian of the public welfare approaching, or he will chase you. You are only supposed to obstruct the curb when making a sale, but this rule is not always followed by a long shot. An experienced faker holds his ground and only moves on when he has to. He can see a cop half a block away, and governs himself accordingly."

"Can one make a good living at this kind of business?" asked Fred.

"Can he? Say, I don't look like a candidate for the poor-house, do I?"

"I should say not."

"If you're smart you can make a bang-up living at it; but you've got to be a glib and convincing talker to reach the top of the ladder of success. The business is full of hams, like any other trade; but these fellows all hug their proper level—their ambition never rises above a meal at a cheap beanery and a bed at a Bowery lodging-house. Many fakers confine their usefulness to a push-cart filled with goods that attract attention in a general way of themselves. The public stops of its own accord before their carts, fingers over their stock of cheap literature, picture post cards, or other articles. They vary their stock according to season and circumstances. On St. Patrick's Day they offer Irish flags, badges and even highly colored chromos of Ireland as she was, is, and will be—perhaps. On our national or local holidays they are to the front with appropriate emblems of the day. While during Christmas week they gather in the shenkels selling toys and ornaments for Christmas trees, and on the following week New Year's cards."

Aleck Brownson then went on to say that he never used a push-cart, or dealt in the familiar truck found upon them.

"No, sir. I keep in touch with the novelty houses, and as soon as something new is announced I go and look at it. If I think it attractive and may catch on I buy a gross, and start for some location that my experience suggests as the best to exploit the novelty in—usually uptown in the shopping district. I have sold a gross—that's twelve dozen, you know—of a new mechanical top on West Twenty-third Street on a single afternoon between one and five, and cleared a profit of over seven dollars. In fact, I have often done better than that with small articles that went like hot cakes at a dime each. I start in by talking and demonstrating and a crowd gathers in short order. I keep on talking even when I'm passing over the goods and taking in the coin, for my object is to hold the crowd, which is my best advertisement, for it acts like a magnet, continually attracting accessions as others drop out. It's a poor day that I don't make five cases, and more often I clear nearer ten."

Fred was quite fascinated with the possibilities of the faker business, for it seemed to promise large financial returns.

Aleck Brownson, who had taken a fancy to the boy from up-state, promised to initiate him into the fine points of the business, and put him up to things he never would have dreamed of had he started out as a faker of his own account.

"You are very kind to interest yourself in me, Brownson," he said, gratefully.

"Don't mention it, dear boy. I rather like you, and when I take a shine to a chap it's for good reasons. I'm not easily fooled, and the fellow who takes me in will have to be a good one. You're fresh from the country, and may therefore be considered pretty green to manners and customs of New York. I shall be glad to put you wise to the game you'll be up against. When I get through with you you won't know yourself.

You'll be a different chap altogether. I'll make a slick faker of you if you've got it in you, and I fancy you have. I've been living on easy street for many a year and that's the street for you to anchor yourself to, for it spells success in large capitals."

"I'll be glad to make a trial of the business," said Fred.

"All right. Now where are you going to stop when you reach the city?"

"Haven't any idea. Maybe you could direct me to some boarding-house where the charge is reasonable."

"I'd advise you to take a room and eat at a restaurant. It will be more convenient for you, for you'll be able to take your meals anywhere, and you never can tell just where you'll be when meal-time comes around. You might be in Brooklyn, three or four miles away from your boarding-house, and doing a rushing trade in some novelty that had caught on, in which case you wouldn't think of quitting till you'd sold out."

"I'm willing to be guided by your experience."

"That's right. Always take advantage of all the pointers that come your way. Never let anything get away from you if you can help it. I usually put up at a house on McDougall Street, on the lower West Side. We'll go there as soon as we get to the city and we may find a couple of rooms vacant. If we don't there are other places in the neighborhood where we can get accommodated. I s'pose you've got a trunk?"

"Yes, a small one."

"The transfer company will look out for that and deliver it as soon as you know where you're going to stop."

"I'll have to get acquainted with the lay of the city before I can expect to do anything," said Fred.

"That won't take you long. I will steer you around till you get the hang of things. Tomorrow we'll go to one of the novelty houses I patronize and see what is new on the market. After I've picked out my own seller I'll select something for you to try your hand at. Then we'll take our stand on some street that I think promises well, say within a few yards of each other, and get down o business. You watch me and see how I sling it into the public, and try to do likewise. As a faker I consider myself a top-notch, so you can't make any mistake by copying my methods at the start, and then improving on them if you can. You can't be too slick at the business; but no matter how smart you are if you get hold of a poor thing, or something that has already been worked to death in the neighborhood, you can't make a satisfactory showing. The real secret of the business is to be first in the right field with a new and taking article, and then work it for all it's worth."

Brownson gave Fred a lot of general advice as the boat continued on her way down the river, and the country boy was much interested in all he said.

As he had a retentive memory he stored it up for future use.

He was ambitious to make a success as a faker, for it was evidently a free and independent calling, and promised excellent financial results to a clever operator.

Fred could not tell whether he was adapted to

it or not, and hinted as much to his new acquaintance.

Brownson encouraged him by assuring him that he was a good judge of the qualities required by a successful faker, and in his opinion Fred possessed enough of them to warrant him giving the business a fair trial.

"I don't think you're easily discouraged, which is a good point. You appear to have grit and perseverance. A boy who has captured a couple of crooks, according to your story, and had the nerve to shoot one of them when he got belligerent is plucky enough to tackle anything, and look out for himself at every stage of the game."

Brownson invited Fred to take dinner with him in the restaurant of the steamer, and the lad accepted. After the meal they went up on the hurricane deck, and the faker pointed out various points of interest along the river, and in every way made himself a most agreeable companion.

He certainly had the gift of gab down to perfection, and Fred let him do most of the talking.

He gave the boy a fund of information about New York, and then switched off to other cities he had visited in different parts of the country.

Fred was quite fascinated by his varied experiences as a faker, and was more than ever attracted to the business in which his new friend shone like an 18-carat diamond of the purest water.

CHAPTER VIII.—Fred Proves He Is a Lad of Nerve and Pluck.

The Albany day-boat reached her last landing about six o'clock and Fred and Brownson followed the crowd ashore.

"Here we are in old New York at last," said the professional faker, enthusiastically. "There is no place like home after all."

Fred guessed he was right, though he felt kind of lonesome himself on the threshold of a great city where he was a complete stranger. Brownson had just come from Chicago, and while he was willing to admit that the Windy City was all to the good, still it wasn't New York. He declared he could make more money in Manhattan than any other city in the country.

"I suppose you won't leave it soon again, then?" said Fred.

"I hope not; but you never can tell. I'm a kind of rolling stone. I'm never satisfied unless I'm on the move. You see, a faker has peculiar advantages, he can make money anywhere. It makes little difference what city he goes to he finds the public the same—always ready to buy when he puts his merchandise up to them in the right way," said Brownson.

The faker piloted the way to a Ninth Avenue elevated station and they rode up to Christopher Street, whence a short walk took them to McDougall. Brownson rang the bell of a small three-story red-brick house, one of a row of similar buildings. A servant girl came to the door.

"Hello, Mary Jane!" said Brownson, in his cheerful fashion, "here I am again."

The girl smiled and seemed glad to see him, which was not to be wondered at since he had tipped her liberally while an inmate of the house.

"Has your missus got any rooms on hand?"

"No single ones, Mr. Brownson. The only vacant one is the large front square one which we let to two gents as a rule."

"Well, here's two gents looking for accommodation. If my friend is willing we'll take it together if the price is right."

"Step in and I'll tell missus that you've got back and want a room," said the servant, showing them into a dark little parlor, filled with furniture and ornaments of a past generation.

"What do you say, Fox—will you double up? This is as good a place to stop as any I know of," said Brownson, as soon as the girl went downstairs to the basement to notify the landlady, who was eating her supper.

"I don't mind," replied Fred, who thought his new friend would make a good room-mate, and that it would be to his interest to keep next to him while learning the ropes.

"All right. We'll take a look at the room, settle the price, and then go to supper, after which we'll see about having our trunks brought here."

The landlady, whose name was Hawkins, which she pronounced 'Awkins, soon made her appearance, and welcomed Brownson like an old friend.

She was a stout, middle-aged widow, who had been born and brought up in the city of London, and after her marriage emigrated to New York with her husband.

"Well, well, Mr. Brownson, it does one's eyes good to see you once more," she said, greeting him effusively. "'Ave you come back to stay?"

"Yes, ma'am, till I get another fit on," replied Brownson. "You're looking well and hearty."

"Yes, I'm always well and 'earty," she replied, glancing at Fred.

"Allow me to make you acquainted with a particular friend of mine; Mrs. Hawkins, Fred Fox. He's from up-state, and is a prime fellow."

"Glad to know you, Mr. Fox. Any friend of Mr. Brownson's is welcome in this 'ouse. 'Ave you come lookin' for a room?" she added to the faker.

"That's the object of our visit, Mrs. Hawkins. Mary Ann says the front square room is vacant, and as my friend is going to double up with me we'll take it if you can make the figure satisfactory."

"My prices are reasonable, Mr. Brownson, as you ought to know, seein' as you're here off and on for many months. I shall be proud and 'appy to take you both for six dollars, which includes attendance, of course," said the landlady.

"Well, let's have a peep at the room, and then we'll decide the momentous question one way or the other."

Mrs. Hawkins led the way up one flight and ushered them into the square room.

A brief inspection of it proved satisfactory, and Brownson, after asking Fred's opinion, closed with the lady and paid her a dollar on account.

"We'll have our trunks sent right away. If they should come before we get back see that the expressman carries them up," said Brownson.

"Certainly, Mr. Brownson; I'll attend to the matter."

Mrs. Hawkins produced two latch-keys, and the new lodgers left to go to supper.

"Make a note of the number, Fox," said Brownson, "and remember it's the third house from the corner of ——— Street."

The walked up to Sixth Avenue, and then up

that thoroughfare till they came to one of the ordinary restaurants near Fourteenth Street.

"It's my treat this time," said Fred, as they took their seats at a table.

"Have it your own way. The prices of this establishment won't break you, I guess," replied Brownson.

They had a satisfactory meal, and the two checks amounted to seventy cents.

It was dark when they came upon the street again.

"I suppose you'd like to see a few of the sights," said the faker. "We'll go over to Broadway near Twenty-third Street first to see about the delivery of our trunks, and then we'll take in the theater district."

They walked across to Union Square, and thence up Broadway to the office of the transfer company, where they left their checks and their address.

"That's the famous Flatiron Building," said Brownson, pointing to a tall, thin structure that stood at the junction of Broadway, Fifth Avenue and Twenty-third Street. "And that park over there is Madison Square. That big building yonder on the Fourth Avenue side of the park is where the six-day walking and bicycle matches you must have heard about are pulled off every once in a while. A big circus always comes there each spring, and they have all kinds of big shows there during the year."

Upper Broadway was lined with people going to the different theaters, many of which were on that thoroughfare.

As they were crossing Herald Square, Fred noticed a taxicab bearing down in a rather reckless way on a gentleman, lady and little girl of ten. He sprang forward and uttered a warning shout to them. In their haste to avoid the vehicle the lady lost her hold on the little girl's hand, and the child tripped and fell directly in the path of the cab. Disregarding the peril of his act Fred ran to the spot and picked the child up, barely escaping being run down by the narrowest margin.

The chauffeur of the cab sped on at increased speed, never looking behind to see whether he had knocked the brave boy and the girl down or not.

Fred, holding the frightened child in his arms, was immediately surrounded by several pedestrians, who had witnessed his thrilling performance.

The child's parents rushed up at the same moment greatly excited, the lady on the point of a hysterical fit.

"That was the pluckiest act I ever saw," said a bystander, as the mother snatched the little girl from Fred's arms.

"You deserve a gold medal," said another man. "Young man, how can I ever thank you for saving my little daughter?" said the grateful father, seizing Fred by the hand and squeezing it.

"You're welcome, sir," replied the boy, feeling somewhat embarrassed as the crowd grew bigger, and he saw that he was the center of attention.

The excited mother was on her knees in the roadway sobbing over the child.

"Come," said the gentleman, "follow me to the sidewalk."

Then he turned to his wife, and raising her, led her away, the crowd still surrounding Fred and

asking for information as to the cause of the incident.

Fred, instead of following the gentleman, as directed, grabbed Brownson by the arm, and hurried him away to the other side of the street.

"Upon my word, you're a peach, Fox," said the faker, enthusiastically. "I wouldn't have done what you did for a farm."

"If I hadn't done it the child would have been run over."

"I'll allow she would; but you took every chance of sacrificing yourself for nothing."

"It was my duty to try and save her."

"Duty is all right, but I don't believe in offering myself as a candidate for the morgue or hospital."

"Well, I'm satisfied that I did the right thing."

"I don't say that you didn't as long as things have turned out all right, but I saw the whole affair and I can tell you right here that you had as close a call as you'll ever have in your life and escape scot free."

"As long as I wasn't hurt there's no use of talking any more about it."

"All right; we'll let it drop, then I'll say, however, that you're as plucky as they come, and you deserve a lifesaver's medal if any one ever did. If a cop or a reporter had turned up your name would be in the papers to-morrow."

"I'm not anxious to get in the papers."

"What did the child's father say to you?"

"He thanked me, and now that I recollect it, he asked me to follow him to the opposite sidewalk."

"Why didn't you do it? He looked like a prosperous person. He probably intended to reward you for the risk you ran in saving his young one."

"I wouldn't take any reward."

"Why not? I think you're entitled to something substantial."

"I'm not risking my life for money."

"You're too particular. I never turned anything down that comes my way. It is a good rule to follow if you expect to get on. Everybody is out for himself in this world, and you want to paste that fact in your hat."

"There are a lot of exceptions. Take yourself, for instance, you are offering me a helping hand in the street merchant business. If you were simply out for yourself you wouldn't bother with me."

"Well, that's true enough; but you see I've taken a shine to you. When I like a chap I'll do a whole lot for him."

"Lots of other people act the same as you are doing now, otherwise this would be a pretty cold and heartless world."

"When a man is really down and out he finds the world pretty icy all right. You ought to see the bread-line at a prominent bakery on some bitter cold night. I'll bet that would open your eyes."

"You are getting away from the subject. By the way, I think the driver of that motor cab ought to be arrested for reckless driving. He couldn't help seeing that gentleman, lady and little girl in his way."

Brownson laughed.

"That's a common thing in this city. Those chauffeurs think more of making time than getting out of the way of pedestrians. They think they own the streets. Hardly a week passes that some automobile doesn't run a man or woman

down, and then skip away as fast as they can. You want to keep your eyes skinned when you are crossing the streets or you'll find yourself laid up for repairs."

Fred made no reply, and soon after they began talking about something else.

Brownson showed his companion around the gayest part of New York at night, and it was midnight by the time they returned to their lodgings.

CHAPTER IX.—Fred's First Experience as a Street Merchant.

At nine o'clock next morning Fred and his friend Brownson were on their way down-town.

The latter had a well worn imitation morocco hand-bag slung over his shoulder by a long leather strap.

"You'll want one of these bags, Fox," he said. "You can pick out one at a trunk store on Cortlandt Street."

The bag was duly purchased and then they proceeded to a big novelty house.

"Where have you been, Brownson," said the clerk who came forward to attend to them. "I haven't seen you in an age."

"Chicago," replied the faker.

"How did you find things there?"

"Fine as silk."

"I suppose you cleaned the people out of all their small change and then shook the town," laughed the clerk.

"Not much. I did well, but I got homesick, took a train back and here I am. What have you got that's new and catchy? You know about what I handle. I don't want anything that's been on the market for the last six months."

"I have a new novelty that has just come in. We haven't put any out yet, and I can guarantee it'll draw attention like a mustard plaster. Come this way and I'll show it to you."

"All right. By the way, let me introduce you to my friend, Fred Fox. I'm putting him into the business, and if I don't make a hummer out of him it will be because there's something lacking in his make-up which I don't see at present."

"Glad to know you, Fox," said the clerk, shaking hands with Fred. "You couldn't find anyone better than Brownson to let you in on all the fine points of a street merchant's business."

He led them to the back part of the salesroom, which occupied the entire floor of a Broadway building.

The novelty the clerk had referred to was brought forth and offered to Brownson for his inspection.

It was an ingenious household article that was both useful and ornamental.

Brownson inspected it carefully and listened to the clerk's description of its many advantages.

He also read the directions accompanying the article.

"It isn't bad, and the retail price is right. How much are you asking for them?"

"We are charging \$8.50 a gross. That will give you a profit of \$5.94 if you sell them all. We'll allow you a nickel apiece on all you may return. I imagine that you won't return any, but will be back for more. You and your friend ought to be

able to work off a gross to-day without turning a hair. I'll guarantee they'll sell on sight."

"You'd guarantee anything, Peters. I'd like to see you up on Twenty-third Street with a bunch of them. You're a good spieler in the store, but I doubt if you could make that clapper of yours work so well on the curb."

"I'm a salesman, not a faker. Still if I was going into your business I wouldn't want anything better than this article to make a start with. I recommend it particularly as a first-class opener for your friend. He'll find it will go like hot cakes without half trying."

"That's where you're wrong, Peters. The public have got to be properly worked or they won't buy gold dollars for a nickel. I've stood alongside chaps who couldn't get people to look at a first-class article, while I've put it all over the same individuals with the rankest sell that ever came my way. It's all in the way you put it to them."

"Well, what do you say about this novelty? Will you take a gross?"

"Yes, I'll give it a trial. If I can't make it go you'd better send your stock back to the manufacturer. How is it packed?"

"Two dozen to a box."

"Tie up four boxes for me and two boxes for my friend. Here's your \$8.50."

"How much will that be for me?" asked Fred, after the clerk went off to get the goods.

"Your share is \$2.84."

Fred came up with that sum.

"We'll walk up to the City Hall now and you can invest \$2 in a license," said Brownson, when they issued from the building with their bundles. "Mine has run out so I'll have to get a new one. Then we'll get up to the shipping district and begin business."

They secured their licenses all right and took a Broadway car up-town.

On the way Brownson handed out a lot of fresh advice to Fred.

"As we've got the same article for sale it won't do for us to stand close together as I intended. You'll have to keep a block away at least. I'll place you on Fourteenth Street in front of one of the big department stores, and go around the corner into Sixth Avenue myself. Keep your bag in front of you to drop your receipts in, and sell your goods from the package, always keeping one or two in your hands. Keep on talking, and put the advantages of the article in the most glowing terms you can think of, something after this fashion," and Brownson began to rattle off a speech in a low tone which he made up as he proceeded.

He proved himself a corker at ready invention, and Fred tried to remember the main points as he brought them out.

They left the car at Fourteenth Street and walked down that thoroughfare.

It was early yet for the bulk of shoppers, but still there were a lot of women out seeking the bargains advertised for that day.

Brownson stationed Fred midway between two department stores, helped him open his bundle, and after giving him some final words of advice, proceeded to hunt up a spot on Sixth Avenue for himself.

Fred felt like a cat in a strange garret as he started in to advertise his goods.

Nearby on either side of him were two other fakers, old hands at the business, who were spilling the merits of some well-known articles that had been on the market for a long time.

Very few persons went near them, but they kept up their bleat with a monotonous chant that rather grated on Fred's nerves.

He didn't like their methods and it spurred him to act differently.

He spread a number of his novelties in full view of the public, and holding one in each hand, began to talk in a good-humored way that presently attracted a couple of ladies.

He followed Brownson's advice to talk, but he was so new that there was nothing professional about his method.

He forgot all about Brownson, in fact, and began to explain the merits of his article in a polite and interesting way, as if talking to friends.

His manner took with the ladies, and the article took, too.

Each bought one, and by that time other persons began to gather, and soon he had a small crowd around him.

His talk was very convincing because he believed in the article himself, and before he knew it he was selling them at a rate that promised to clean him out long before Brownson suspected that he would be able to sell a quarter of his stock.

He kept up a continuous talk without being aware of the fact, and in this way kept quite a crowd around him all the time. And that was the keynote of his success, for the article was really a winner, one sale leading to another.

The result was that at one o'clock he sold the last of his stock, and could have disposed of several more if he had had them. Then he woke up, as it were, from the atmosphere of business, not a little surprised that he had reached the end of his tether, and started for Sixth Avenue to find Brownson.

He discovered his friend near the corner of Eighteenth Street, surrounded by a crowd, and talking and selling like a house afire. He waited ten minutes till the crowd began to thin out and Brownson paused to take breath and wipe his forehead.

"Why, hello, Fox," said the professional faker, "got tired already? How did things pan out?"

"I've sold out," replied Fred.

"The dickens you have! You have done well. I haven't got rid of my dozen yet. I'll let you have another box to keep you going."

"All right; but I guess I'll have something to eat before I start in again," replied Fred.

"You must learn to do without eating during business hours," laughed Brownson. "There's a lunch-house across the street. Don't eat much. You'll find me here when you get back."

Fred returned in fifteen minutes, got two dozen more from his friend and returned to Fourteenth Street.

His success continued and he sold out again by four o'clock. This time he found Brownson up near Twenty-third Street, with nearly a dozen still unsold.

Fred waited half an hour till his friend found purchasers for his final two and then joined him.

"Sold out again, have you?" said Brownson.

"Yes, three-quarters of an hour ago."

"Upon my word, there are no flies on you. Your first attempt at the business, too. Why, you've actually put it over me. You are certainly a hummer. I made no mistake when I sized you up as well fitted for the business."

The faker asked him many questions about his experience, and congratulated him on his successful debut as a street merchant.

Then they went to dinner together, after which they returned to their lodgings, both satisfied that they had a good thing in the new novelty.

CHAPTER X.—A Strenuous Experience.

Fred had made a profit of \$2.95 during the five hours he spent on Fourteenth Street, and that was more than half as much as he had received from Nathan Baxter, of Chester Village, for six days' work of fourteen hours each in the store.

He felt satisfied he could have earned another dollar if he had had the stock to dispose of, for things were coming his way at a great rate when he had to stop for lack of goods.

Soon after they reached their room, Mrs. Hawkins bustled in to inquire if they wanted anything.

"No, Mrs. Hawkins, we are bountifully supplied with all that the law allows," replied Brownson. "We haven't any kick coming that I know of."

"I'm glad to 'ear it, Mr. Brownson," replied the landlady. "I make it a point to treat my lodgers well, which you ought to know, seein' as you've stopped with me off and on these two years back."

"I'm bound to say that you're all right, Mrs. Hawkins," said Brownson. "A chap never has to ask twice for anything he's entitled to."

"Thank you, Mr. Brownson; you are certainly a real gent. It's a pleasure to 'ave a lodger who appreciates my efforts to make him comfortable, and I may say that the same applies to your friend. If you gents want anythin' at any time come down to the basement and state your wishes: I shall be only too proud and 'appy to wait on you."

Thus speaking the landlady bowed herself out of the room.

"Nothing like pitching a little soft solder into your landlady," chuckled Brownson. "I have found that it pays."

Next morning the two street merchants went downtown to renew their stock of the latest novelty with which they had been so successful the day before.

The same clerk came up to them.

"Well, how did they go?" he asked, surmising that his customers must have sold out as they had brought none of their stock back.

"Fox says they went like dew before the morning sun," replied Brownson.

"I told you they'd sell themselves."

"They didn't sell themselves with me. I had to give the public my usual game of talk; but I'll admit they bit nobly. My friend, however, made a great success with them. I started him with two boxes, not expecting he'd sell more than two or three dozen. He sold the four dozen before I got that number off my hands, and I had to give him another box to keep his hands in. That's

a pretty good start for a new hand at the business."

"He is evidently born to the trade. How many will you take today?"

"Give us eight boxes. That will be sixteen dozen. We get the extra four dozen at the gross rate, of course?"

"Certainly. Seventy-one cents a dozen. For any quantity under a gross the price is seventy-five cents a dozen."

He brought them eight boxes and a bill for \$11.36.

Fred put up half of that amount, and they went uptown with four boxes each.

This time Brownson took his friend to Twenty-third Street and left him in front of a big department store. He looked upon Sixth Avenue as his special field, because the biggest crowds were to be met there. At half-past five Brownson had sold out, and he went around to see how Fred was getting on. Fox had a crowd around him and was disposing of the last of his stock.

Their profit that day amounted to \$3.92 each.

Fred thought that pretty good for seven hours' work. He had had no lunch, and was glad to go to dinner when Brownson suggested that it was time to eat.

Next day was Saturday and they were on the job with a fresh stock. Fred took in Fourteenth Street again, and Brownson stuck to Sixth Avenue as usual. Their success continued, and Fred had no kick coming when he and his friend came together around six o'clock with nearly \$4 profit in his bag. After working Twenty-third Street again on the following Monday, Brownson told Fred to try his luck downtown for a change.

Accordingly he stationed himself on Fulton Street, in front of a well-known quick-lunch house. Brownson introduced him to a couple of fakers who made that locality their stamping grounds.

"He's new at the business," he told them. "Besides he's a friend of mine, and I want him to have a square deal."

They agreed to see that he wasn't interfered with by any of the fraternity who might feel jealous at his intrusion in their domain. Fred didn't do quite as well at first with the men passers-by who were his exclusive material to draw upon. He was more successful with women, who were taken by his polite and engaging ways, and good-looking face. He was obliged to adopt tactics more like Brownson in order to push his goods.

On the whole the result was disappointing to him after his uptown success, for he only made \$2 that day.

Brownson also had a couple of dozen left over, which reduced his day's profit to a little less than \$3.

"Better luck tomorrow," he said to Fred. "I want to break you in downtown, even if you do make less, for the next line of goods you tackle may not go at all in the shopping district, while Fulton, Ann and Nassau Streets may be just the right places to work them off. When you get wiser to the business you'll learn to size up the localities where certain things sell best. After a while you might like to try your hand at a cart. I don't care for them, as it's harder to keep on the move, but you can carry a larger and more varied stock. You can get a cart of the dealer

on Ann Street you patronize for your stock. I'd advise you, however, to stick to my style, and look for just one kind of novelty which you can carry around in your hands—that is in bundles."

We will not follow Fred through his apprentice stage of the street merchant business, merely saying that he had his days of failure as well as success.

On the whole he did uncommonly well for a beginner, and his average profits were quite satisfactory to him. He was ambitious, however, to reach the same plane on which Brownson stood. He could not hope to accomplish in weeks what it had taken Brownson months to arrive at, with the full exercise of a glib tongue and ready wit. Still he felt sure he would eventually reach the goal at which he aimed. After the lapse of three months Fred had the lay of the city, and a part of Brooklyn, down pretty fine.

He could go anywhere without fear of getting mixed up. As soon as the sales of the particular article they were selling dropped perceptibly they would make a tour of the different novelty houses in search of something else that struck them as likely to prove a ready seller. Two or three times Fred visited the Ann Street cellars and took a cart full of ordinary truck out; but though he did pretty well with the stuff he preferred, on the whole, the Brownson method of devoting himself to a single article, and carrying it around in a bundle.

One day he started for Brooklyn with just his bag full of a new patented pencil-sharpener. It was a superior kind of tool, made to retail for twenty-five cents, and cost him \$1.80 a dozen. He carried six dozen with him, and they took up only a part of the space of his bag. On account of the price he hardly expected to sell more than half of his stock; but if he did that he would make more than \$3.

Instead of standing on the street he decided to make a house-to-house canvass among the retail establishments, the proprietors or clerks of which were likely to use such an article. It was noon when he reached Fulton Street across the bridge, and as he felt hungry he entered a small restaurant to take a light lunch. Two young men sat down at the same table almost at the same time. While waiting for the waiter to bring his order, he took out one of the pencil-sharpeners and a pencil and proceeded to give an impromptu demonstration.

The young men regarded the sharpener with some interest.

"Where did you buy that?" asked one of them.

"I'm selling it," replied Fred. "Try it. It's the best thing of its kind on the market."

"What's the price of it?" asked the chap who was making a trial of it.

"A quarter."

"Rather dear, but I guess it's worth it."

"It certainly is. You see, it's got a double-edged blade held in place by that little thumb-screw. The blade is made of finely tempered steel that will hold its edge a good while. When it gets dull all you have to do it to loosen the screw, take out the blade and reverse it, then your implement will work as good as ever. When both sides of the blade are dull they can be sharpened like a knife or a pair of scissors, so you see one of those sharpeners ought to last a life-time."

"I'll take this one," said the young man, passing over a quarter.

"Give me one, too," said his companion.

"Sold many so far?" asked the first buyer.

"These two are the first. I'm only starting in to sell them," replied Fred.

When he went to pay his check to the restaurant man he showed his sharpener and gave him a demonstration. The man took one, and thus our young faker got rid of three with hardly an effort. Fred, much to his satisfaction, met with considerable success in selling his pencil-sharpeners that day. By half-past five he had sold five dozen, leaving only twelve more to be disposed of, representing a profit of \$6.

"If I could do as well every day I'd soon have a fat bank account," he said to himself, as he turned down a side street, on his way to another business thoroughfare further on where he hoped to wind up his stock.

As he approached the corner he noticed two hard-looking men standing near the side-door of a saloon. They eyed him and his bag pretty sharply. It was a dull afternoon, and the side street was rather deserted at the moment. Suddenly the men, after a brief conference, left their lounging place and came toward him.

Fred didn't like their looks, and suspected that their intentions were not honest, so he started to cross the way.

"Hold on, young feller," said one of the men. "What yer got for sale?"

"Nothing that you have any use for," replied Fred.

"How d'ye know that? If it's cheap joolry we're lookin' for a chance to buy some. Me and me pal is a bit flush jest now."

If they were they didn't look it, and the young faker was wary of them.

"I haven't got any cheap jewelry," he replied.

"What have you got in that bag, then?"

"Pencil-sharpeners."

"Let's see 'em," asked the other chap.

As Fred carried his receipts in the bag he did not care to give them a peep inside, lest the temptation should lead them to try and do him up to get possession of the bag. The men were, however, determined to see what was in the bag, suspecting there might be money there, as they knew fakers carried their funds in their bags as a rule. One darted forward and headed the boy off while his companion grabbed Fred by the arms.

Biff! Fred's fist took the nearest rascal in the jaw and sent him reeling away.

"Grab him, Batt," cried the man who had been struck. "Don't let him get away. I'll fix you for that blow, see if I don't," he added vengefully.

Both toughs closed in quickly on Fred and he had his hands full trying to save himself. At that moment a policeman appeared around the corner. Seeing what was going on he rushed to the rescue of the boy merchant. The rascals failed to notice his approach until he was right on them. As the policeman seized one of the toughs the fellow's companion snatched his nightstick from his side and raised it to hit the officer.

"Take that, you rascal!" cried Fred, starting forward and slugging the ruffian under the jaw.

CHAPTER XI.—Fred Refuses to be Bribe

The blow delivered by Fred was a telling one, for he had lots of muscle in his right arm, and the ruffian reeled sideways and fell sprawling upon the slanting cellar door close by.

The nightstick fell from his hand, and Fred picking it up, threatened to club the fellow if he made any attempt to rise. The policeman realized what he had escaped, and naturally he felt grateful to Fred for his timely interference. He easily mastered the other tough, and holding him securely by one hand blew his whistle for assistance. The sound attracted a number of passers-by, and soon a crowd collected around the spot. Fred kept too inquisitive people at a distance with the club, and also held the tough in subjection.

"I'll get square with you," he glowered at the boy.

"I don't think you will," answered Fred cheerfully.

"I'll know yer ag'in. You're a street faker and I'm bound to meet yer some time, then I'll fix yer."

"You'll go to prison for this highway robbery attempt, so the chances are you won't come my way for some time."

"You'll have to come along and make the charge," said the policeman.

"I'll do it," said Fred.

Fifteen minutes later the prisoners were lodged in cells, and Fred was told to appear at the magistrate's court in the morning to testify against the men. He promised to be on hand and left to finish the sale of his sharpeners, which he accomplished before seven o'clock.

Then he got his dinner and returned to Mc Dougall Street as fast as he could. Brownson was not in the room when Fred got there, so feeling somewhat tired he got a pack of cards, with which he and the king-pin faker often amused themselves, and proceeded to kill time over a game of solitaire. About half-past nine somebody rang the door-bell, and in a few minutes Mary Jane came upstairs and knocked at Fred's door.

"Come in," cried the boy.

The servant poked her head in.

"There's a man at the door who wants to see you," she said.

"Wants to see me, eh? What's his name?"

"He didn't give it. He said his business was important."

"All right. I'll go down and see him," said Fred, turning the gas low and following Mary Jane downstairs.

The visitor was a hard-featured, burly man, and a complete stranger to Fred.

"Well, sir. I'm Fred Fox. What do you want to see me about?"

"I came over from Brooklyn to see you about that charge you have made against two men who were arrested for an alleged assault on you," said the stranger.

"They assaulted me all right. The policeman on the beat who made the arrest was a witness of it," returned the boy, feeling satisfied that this was some friend of the toughs.

"You made the charge of highway robbery against them."

"I did. They tried their best to get my bag, containing nearly \$10 in money, and some of my stock in trade, away from me."

"You mistook their object. They only wanted to buy something from you."

"Look here, my friend, you were not there when the trouble took place so what do you know about it?"

"I have the men's statement."

"They'd say anything to try and get out of the hole they're in. Are you a personal friend of theirs? If you are I don't care to have anything to say to you on the subject. I shall appear against the men in court in the morning, and it will be up to the magistrate to hold them for trial."

"I'm not exactly a personal friend of theirs. My name is Johnson, and I'm the captain of the district they live in. They sent for me to help them out, and I'm doing what I can for them."

"What do you expect to gain by calling on me?"

"I'm willing to make it worth your while not to show up in court in the morning."

"What do you mean by making it worth my while?"

"I've brought \$100 over to give you if you guarantee to keep away from Brooklyn until the case is settled."

"Then you came on a foolish errand, for I don't accept bribes."

"The \$100 I have offered you ought to be worth more to you than the satisfaction of trying to put those men through."

"It isn't though it will take me some time to earn that amount of money. I owe a duty to the public as well as myself to see that those rascals are put where they won't be able to repeat their tricks for some time to come."

Finding that he could make no headway with Fred, Johnson bade him a curt good-night and went away.

Brownson appeared as the caller went off.

"Who is that chap?" he asked Fred. "He looks tough."

"Come up-stairs and I'll explain the cause of his visit."

When they were seated in their room, Fred told Brownson all about his experience in Brooklyn that afternoon, and then said that his visitor was a man named Johnson, who represented himself as the captain of the election district where the prisoners lived.

No more was said on the subject, and they engaged in a game of cards till Fred got sleepy and said he was going to bed.

Next morning he appeared in court, and though some political pressure was exerted in the toughs' behalf, the magistrate held them on Fred's evidence and that of the policeman.

When he got back to the house he found a letter there from the District Attorney's office of Buffalo, commanding his appearance three days hence to testify at the trial of Gunnion, the crook-passenger of the canal-boat Mary Ann.

He decided to combine business with necessity, and when he took the train on the day before the date set for the trial he carried a supply of pencil-sharpeners with him to work off on the business people of the city he was going to.

Gunnion's trial was short and to the point.

He was convicted and sentenced to fifteen years in State prison.

At the close of the proceedings the Buffalo manufacturer handed Fred \$1,000 in money to show his appreciation of the boy's services in saving \$15,000 worth of his own and his wife's property, which would probably have been lost to them had Gunnion reached New York in safety with his plunder.

Although he saved a matter of over \$6,000 to old Nathan Baxter, that individual did not even take the trouble to thank him, which did not at all surprise Fred, who knew the miserly and ungracious disposition of the Chester storekeeper.

Fred stayed three days in Buffalo, sold all his sharpeners, and then went on to Chester, where he spent one day among his old associates.

He told them he was doing first rate in the city, and expected to make his fortune before he turned up in Chester again. Most of his friends envied him his good prospects and not a few wished they were in his shoes as he bade them good-by and started back to New York.

CHAPTER XII.—Fred's New Friends.

With \$1,000 and the profits of the sale of his pencil-sharpeners in his pocket, Fred felt pretty good on his way back to New York.

He said nothing to Brownson about the money he had received from the Buffalo manufacturer, but deposited it in a savings bank as the nucleus of the fortune he hoped to accumulate in the course of time.

Next day after his return he took hold of a novelty Brownson recommended him to work off in the shopping district and took his stand on Twenty-third Street to do business.

By this time he had become a pretty clever faker, and had unlimited confidence in his ability to handle the public. He had just begun to announce the merits of his new article when a stylishly dressed lady and little girl came down the street. The girl looked at him and seemingly struck by his face began to tell her mother something in an eager way. The lady looked at Fred, stopped and after some hesitation approached him.

"Madam, permit me to show you the very latest thing in——"

"I beg your pardon, young man, but may I ask if you are not the boy who saved my little girl from being run over by a taxicab one evening about three months ago?"

Fred stopped talking and looked at her in surprise.

"I did save a little girl from being run down in Herald Square about that time. Was it your daughter, and is this the little girl?" he said.

"Yes, and I am glad to have met you, as we have been anxious to see you. My husband tried hard to find some trace of you, but failed to learn who you were, or where you lived. Here is my address on this card. You must promise to call on us some evening soon. You will do so, won't you?"

Fred glanced at the card and saw that the lady's name was Hazelton.

"Certainly, madam, if you wish me to."

"It should regard it as a favor. And now let me

"thank you for what you did for my little Eva. It was a brave act on your part, and it has been a matter of regret to us that we lost sight of you so soon, before we could fittingly express to you the deep gratitude we feel toward you for your priceless service."

"Don't mention it, ma'am. I consider I only did my duty. If the little girl will shake hands with me I'll consider the matter square."

"You shouldn't make light of an act that almost cost you your own life perhaps. But for your quickness my child would probably have been killed, and you yourself might have suffered a like fate."

"That's quite true, ma'am, but as long as we both escaped it doesn't make any difference now," replied the young street merchant.

"What are you selling?" asked little Eva curiously.

Fred told her and then shook hands with her.

"You may kiss me if you want to," she said, with naive frankness.

"I couldn't refuse such an offer from so pretty a little girl as you are," he said, stooping and kissing her.

"I like you," she replied. "You're a nice boy, and you saved me from being run over."

"And you have paid me up with a kiss," returned Fred.

"You must call at our house and see my papa," said the little fairy.

"When will you come?" asked Mrs. Hazelton.

"Any evening at all that suits you."

"Say next Wednesday then. I will tell my husband and he will make it a point to be at home."

"All right," said Fred. "I will call next Wednesday evening."

Satisfied with his promise to call, Mrs. Hazelton and her little daughter bade him good-by and walked on.

It took Fred several minutes to get down to business again, but he at last managed to attract a crowd, and then his sales commenced in earnest.

Brownson was selling the same goods on Sixth Avenue, and the pair did not come together till after six.

Neither had sold out entirely, although they had done very well.

"Say, Aleck, who do you suppose I had the honor of talking to this morning?" said Fred, when he and his companion were seated in a restaurant waiting to be served.

"Ask me something easier, Fred. I'm not a mind-reader," replied Brownson.

"The little girl I saved from the taxicab on the evening of the day I first reached this city, and her mother."

"That so. Did they recognize you?"

"Yes, and came right up to me. They must be well off for they were dressed fine. The little girl was particularly friendly—kissed me right on the street."

"I suppose they overwhelmed you with expressions of their gratitude and all that?"

"Yes, the lady thanked me for saving her little girl, and insisted that I call on them at their home. Told me that her husband has been trying to find me."

"You'll call, of course?"

"I promised to do so."

"And you always keep your word. Where do they live?"

"Somewhere on West Seventy-second Street. I've got the lady's card."

"That's a swell street. What's the lady's name?"

"Hazelton."

"You must take advantage of the chance, old man. If they offer to do anything for you don't turn it down. Don't be so confounded particular about your notions of duty. Take all the favors that the gods provide, or you are liable to queer your luck."

"I don't know what they can do for me. I'm getting along all right, and don't ask any help from anybody. I started out to make my way in the world through my own exertions, and I expect to do it," replied Fred.

"That's all right; but my motto is not to refuse a lift when it's offered."

Here the waiter brought their orders and they began to eat.

They had reached the dessert stage when a small newsboy entered with a late edition of two or three of the afternoon papers.

Fred bought one, and so did Brownson.

Glancing over the news of the day the attention of the former was arrested by a small paragraph telegraphed from up-state.

It was headed "A Criminal Escapes from a fast-moving Train."

Then followed:

"Edward Gunnion, convicted last Friday in Buffalo of burglary, and sentenced to fifteen years in the State prison, made his escape this morning from a rapidly-moving train while in the custody of an officer who was taking him to the prison. Owing to the fact that the prisoner has apparently been in poor physical condition since his recovery from a pistol-shot wound inflicted at the time of his capture, the officer neglected to handcuff him to the seat, as is customary. When the train was passing over the bridge across Wesley Creek, Gunnion made a sudden dash for the door of the car, gained the platform, and sprang into the water. The train was stopped and a search instituted for him, but no trace was found of him."

Fred uttered an exclamation which attracted Brownson's attention.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"You know about that crook I went to Buffalo to testify against last week?" said Fred.

"Yes. You told me that he got fifteen years."

"He escaped from the officer who was taking him to the prison today."

"The dickens he did! How did he manage to do it?"

"Read the story yourself," and Fred passed the paper to Brownson.

"He's a pretty foxy chap," said Aleck, after reading the paragraph. "He probably shammed weakness for the purpose of hoodwinking the officer."

"I guess so. I hope they'll catch him. He's a dangerous man to be at liberty. I wouldn't like to meet him, at any rate, for he swore to get even with me."

On Wednesday evening Fred put on a few extra frills and called at the residence of the Hazeltons on Seventy-second Street.

He received a warm welcome from Mr. and

Mrs. Hazelton, while Eva appeared to be delighted to see him again.

"Why did you run away that evening?" asked Mr. Hazelton. "I told you to follow us to the sidewalk."

"I had a friend waiting for me, and as you had thanked me I thought the incident was closed," replied Fred.

"Such a favor as you rendered us can never really be closed," answered Mr. Hazelton. "Eva is our only child, and had she been killed, or maimed for life, I do not know what we should have done. Those chauffeurs have got to be quite indifferent to the safety of people who cross the path of their machines. Scarcely a day passes but the newspapers report some outrage on their part. At any rate, only for your presence of mind and nerve we might now be childless, therefore you will understand how deeply grateful we feel toward you."

"I am glad I was able to save your little girl, and I can understand your feelings in the matter," said Fred.

"You have made us your stanch friends for life, Mr. Fox, and it will give me great pleasure if I can be of any service to you."

"Thank you, sir; but I don't believe you can do anything for me, at least at present."

"May I ask what business you are in?"

"I am a street merchant."

"A street merchant!" exclaimed the gentleman.

"Yes. I usually stand on the curb of the sidewalk and sell my goods to the passers-by. Sometimes I go around among the small retail stores and work off some new article that way."

"Indeed," said the gentleman. "How came you to adopt that business?"

Fred explained how he had met Aleck Brownson, an expert faker, on the Albany boat; and how Brownson had taken a fancy to him, and had talked up his own trade in such glowing colors, that he (Fred) was quite fascinated by the possibilities it offered for money-making.

"And has it met the anticipations you formed of it?"

"It certainly has. I am doing very well indeed. In fact, I've had very good luck from the start."

"I should imagine that it was rather a strenuous business, subject to setbacks when the weather is bad, and other inconveniences."

"That's true, sir. I haven't had any experience during the winter for I've only been at it three months. During the hot spell I managed to pick out a shady spot somewhere, or changed my plan of selling. However, no one can expect to have things made to order just to suit him. We must make the most of the good and put up with the bad. Take the lean with the fat, and if the average is satisfactory that is all anyone can ask."

"Wouldn't you accept an indoor position, where the weather wouldn't affect you, and you would get a regular salary, with prospects of promotion and additional recompense?"

"I don't think I'd care to make any change just at present," replied Fred. "I can see possibilities in the business that lead to better things than selling on the street. I am at the foot of the ladder now, and I intend to work my way up to the top. Even at this stage of the game my receipts exceed

my necessary expense; consequently I am acquiring a bank account. That will be very useful to me one of these days when I see the chance to use a little capital to advantage in extending my sphere of usefulness."

Mr. Hazelton listened to him attentively.

"Nevertheless, my offer holds good in case you should wish to avail yourself of it," said the gentleman.

Fred spent a very pleasant evening with the Hazeltons, and when he got up to go he received a pressing invitation from Mrs. Hazelton to call soon again, and he promised to do so.

CHAPTER XIII.—Fred Goes to a Smoker and Meets With a Surprise.

A couple of weeks elapsed since Fred's visit to the Hazeltons.

Late one afternoon when he and Brownson came together after their day's work and started for the nearest restaurant. Aleck handed him a card of invitation to a political club's smoker at its rooms on Broadway around Seventy-fifth Street.

"Better take it in, Fred," said his room-mate. "I know you don't smoke, but you don't have to. This club always gives a high-class vaudeville show at its smokers, and it's well worth attending. Go early and you'll get a seat up front."

"Why don't you go?"

"I would but I've got an engagement that I have to keep."

"Then you think I'd better go up there?"

"I do. I'll guarantee that you'll enjoy yourself."

"All right, I'll go," said Fred, putting the ticket in his pocket.

"Get there about half-past seven, for there is bound to be a jam around eight and you couldn't get a seat at that hour. You don't have to dress up. It is a free and easy affair. Nobody puts on any lugs. It will be seven by the time we finish supper isn't any use of you going to the house."

At half past seven Fred walked up the stairs of the building where the club-house was, presented his ticket to a doorkeeper, and was admitted to a good-sized room, at one end of which was a stage with a draped curtain.

On a raised platform close to it stood a piano.

Three or four hundred chairs were arranged in rows across the room, and already a part of the front ones were filled with guests.

They were all of the male gender, of course, and mostly young.

Fred went forward and got a good seat near the center aisle.

He found a single sheet program on the chair, announcing the names of the artists, male and female, who had been engaged for the occasion.

They were all first-class, not an amateur on the list, and were expected to show up after they had done their regular turn at a well-known music hall near West Sixty-fifth Street.

The room filled up rapidly after Fred's appearance there and before eight o'clock every seat was occupied, and the later arrivals had to form in rows at the rear of the place.

By half past eight, when the president of the club came out on the platform to say a few words, the room was packed to the doors, and the upper stratum of air was hazy with tobacco smoke.

A couple of political speakers filled in the time until the first artiste, a lady comic vocalist, arrived to make things interesting.

From that time on the performers arrived singly and in pairs, and the show lasted till half-past eleven, at which hour the president announced that, by particular request, a couple of clever amateur bantam-weight pugilists would wind up the evening's entertainment with a three-round "go."

Fred didn't care much for this sort of thing, but it was evident that the crowd did, for they showed decided interest in the "scrap," which was a lively one from all points of view.

When it was over the spectators began leaving, and the young street salesman followed with the tide.

He found that the weather had assumed a threatening appearance, and that it was drizzling at that moment.

Turning up his coat collar, he started for Seventy-second Street, whence he could walk over to an elevated station.

Before he had gone far the rain came down so hard that he was obliged to seek shelter in the doorway of a building, the upper floors of which were rented out as flats.

The wind blowing the rain in on him, he squeezed as close to the door as he could, and then he discovered that it was not locked, so he took the liberty of stepping into the dark hall, allowing the door to stand ajar so he could tell when the rain let up sufficiently to allow him to proceed on his way.

He had been there about a minute when two men rushed up and stopped in the entrance.

"This rain will keep the cops under cover," laughed one of them, and the tone of his voice sounded familiar to Fred's ears.

"It's a good night for our job," replied the other. "As dark as we could wish for, but I'd rather it would let up raining."

"You were all through the house yesterday, looking for a reported leak in the gas pipes."

"Yes, and I've got the lay of the place down fine. There's a small safe built into the wall of the sleeping-room on the second floor where I guess the madam keeps her jewelry and other valuables, and probably a wad of money as well. It's an easy proposition to get into it. There's a big safe in the dining-room where I judge the plate is kept."

"How many people on the premises?"

"The gent, his wife and one little kid. They sleep in the two rooms on the second floor rear," was the reply. "The front room and alcove are used as a sitting-room. There are two women servants, and they sleep at the top of the house. If there's anyone else I don't know of it, though there are two furnished bed-rooms on the third floor, and a billiard and smoking-room."

"You're a genius for overcoming obstacles, Benson."

"It's part of the business, as you ought to know."

"I'm not slow myself, as my record proves."

"I'll allow that you're a good one, Gunnion, and for that reason I don't see how you allowed a boy to trap you. You lost a fine swag, and only for your smartness and nerve, you'd be doing time now."

Fred, from behind the door, heard every word

the men spoke, and it gradually dawned upon him that they were a pair of crooks contemplating a "job" for that night.

When the one named Benson addressed his companion as Gunnion, and spoke about him having been trapped by a boy, a thrill ran through the young street merchant's nerves, and he realized that the man with the familiar voice was the rascal who had escaped from the moving train three weeks since—the crook whose capture he had been instrumental in bringing about.

Then he listened as the men continued talking.

"Yes, it was a shame that I was tripped up. Some day I hope to meet that lad—I believe he's in the city—and when I do he don't get much chance to say his prayers," gritted Gunnion.

"I wouldn't blame you for fixing him. He cost you \$15,000 in plate and jewels, and \$6,000 in cash. It's enough to make a fellow turn green with rage. Your pal managed to make his escape."

"Don't mention him. He was a lobster! Had he possessed any nerve at all he could have downed the boy when I was shot, and saved me and the swag."

"No use crying over spilled milk," said Benson. "This job to-night should be pulled off without any great trouble, and your half of the swag will put you on your feet."

"Come on, then," said Gunnion, and the two rascals left the shelter of the doorway and proceeded down Broadway.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Burglary.

As soon as they stepped out on the sidewalk, Fred opened the door and looked after them.

He saw that they were keeping straight on down the street so he lost no time in following them.

Several times he found it necessary to dodge into one of the area-ways when he saw them look around, but he never lost sight of them, and finally saw them stop in front of a high-stoop house that struck him was the one in which the Hazeltons lived.

After looking around the neighborhood carefully, the men entered the area-way and went to the iron gate which shut off the space under the stoop and protected the front basement door.

Fred now hurried forward, keeping the house constantly in sight lest he might confound it with one on either side which looked as like it in the gloom as one pea to another.

When he reached a point directly opposite it there were no signs of the men.

They had let themselves in through the iron gate with the aid of the key that Benson had in some way secured.

"Now what shall I do?" the boy asked himself. "If I had any idea where I could find a policeman I'd go after him at once. The chances of finding one are too slim for me to leave those fellows in the house. If Gunnion wasn't one of them I wouldn't care so much, but I am determined to have him captured to-night if I can. Besides, I feel sure that is where the Hazeltons live, and there is no saying what might happen before I got back with an officer. The only thing I see that I can do is to follow them inside if they have left

the basement door unlocked, which is likely they'll do in order to facilitate their escape when they are ready to leave."

Fred went on toward the next corner, crossed the street and walked back till he came to the house.

Then he entered the area-way and found the iron gate closed but not locked.

Passing through into the space under the stoop he tried the basement door.

It yielded to his touch, and he walked into the house.

He listened in the darkness of the lower hall but heard no sound.

So he made his way softly up-stairs.

He soon found himself in the main hall of the house.

Fred continued on up to the second floor, where he believed the rascals were.

He was not mistaken.

They were already at work at the safe after laying a drugged cloth over the faces of the sleeping Mr. Hazelton and his wife.

The door leading into the small room beyond was open, but as they knew the little girl was sleeping there, and not likely to interfere with them, they did not bother to shut it.

Fred peeped through the keyhole of the closed chamber door and caught a glimpse of the men at work.

He retreated into the sitting-room in front to consider what he should do next.

Striking a match he looked around and on a small ornamental table in a corner of the alcove he saw a telephone.

"I'll call up the police," he said to himself.

After seeing that the door was closed, he put the receiver to his ear and was presently in communication with "Central."

"I want you to connect me with the nearest police-station to Seventy-second Street. There are burglars in the house," he said in a low distinct tone.

The connection was made, and Fred was soon talking with the officer in charge.

He made known the situation and told the number of the house. He was informed that several officers would be hurried around at once. Hanging up the receiver, he opened the alcove window, intending to watch for their approach. At that moment the door of the sitting-room was opened and Benson flashed a dark-lantern around the place. They had cleaned out the safe in the sleeping-room, taken Mr. Hazelton's watch, money and other valuables from his clothes, and were about to return downstairs to tackle the big safe in the dining-room.

Fearful that they might enter the alcove and discover him, Fred left the window and hid behind one side of the alcove curtains. The rascals came into the sitting-room, picked up one or two small ornaments, and then flashed their lantern into the alcove. A bronze statuette stood on a marble pedestal close to Fred's elbow. When the light flashed around the alcove he shrank closer to the curtain. In doing so his elbow displaced the statuette and it fell to the floor with a thud.

The rascals started at the sound, and throwing the light on the curtain saw the statuette lying on the floor.

"How in thunder did that come to fall?" said Gunnion.

"Blessed if I can tell you. We didn't touch it," replied Benson.

"It's blamed curious," said Gunnion.

He walked to the curtain, pulled it aside and discovered Fred standing there. As the light, held by Benson, played on the boy's face and figure, Gunnion started back in consternation, while his companion uttered an imprecation.

"Fred Fox!" gritted Gunnion, recognizing the boy.

"Yes, I'm Fred Fox," replied the young street merchant, seeing that Gunnion knew him.

"What are you doing here?" asked the rascal, hoarsely, while his eyes blazed with a murderous light.

"I think that question is up to you," replied the boy, coolly. "What are you two doing in this house at this hour? It is not hard to guess your purpose here. You are up to your old game again, Gunnion, and I think it will be the last job you'll do for a long time to come."

"Yes?" snarled the rascal. "Well, at least you won't be the one to blow on me. I've a long score to settle with you, and I'm going to settle it now."

With that he sprang at the boy and tried to seize him by the throat.

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion.

Fred, conscious that he was in a perilous position, was watching both men narrowly, consequently when Gunnion jumped at him he struck out with his right fist and landed on the point of the man's jaw.

The blow was a heavy one and Gunnion went down like a stricken ox. Benson, seeing that his pal was knocked out for the moment at least, uttered an exclamation of anger and drew his revolver. He did not intend to fire at the boy, as that would be likely to attract notice, but he expected to intimidate the lad so that he could knock him down by a quick rush, and then batter him into insensibility.

He didn't know the boy he was dealing with. Barely had he got the weapon out of his pocket before Fred rushed at him. The boy grabbed the revolver and a desperate struggle ensued in the dark for its possession, for Benson had been compelled to drop the lantern.

Gunnion was coming to his senses, and that made the prospects pretty bad for Fred, who had his hands full with Benson.

"Let go or I'll shoot you," cried the rascal.

"You've been trying to do that since you drew your gun. I'm not such a fool as to give you the chance if I can help myself," replied the boy, hanging on to the arm which held the weapon.

At that moment Gunnion scrambled on his feet and looked around.

He could hear the struggle going on within a few feet of him. Stepping forward he picked up the lantern and turned the bull's-eye on Fred and his pal.

He saw that the boy could not escape him, and with an exclamation of satisfaction, he drew his own revolver, and grabbing it by the barrel, reached down to brain the lad.

At that juncture Benson exerted all his strength and rolled Fred over on his back.

"Now I've got you, and I'll——"

He got no further, for the blow intended by Gunnion for Fred, descended on his head with a sickening smash, and with a groan his muscles relaxed and he rolled on to the carpet with a fractured skull.

Gunnion started back aghast at the unexpected result of his effort to do up the young street merchant.

That saved Fred, who snatched the revolver from Benson's nerveless fingers and, covering Gunnion, said:

"Drop that gun of yours or I'll let daylight into you."

He realized that the game was up unless he could put the boy out of business. Instead of dropping his revolver, he dropped the lantern and sprang aside. Fred fired, but missed him. He sprang up just as Gunnion, now desperate and caring little for consequences, fired back at him. The bullet skinned Fred's leg like a hot iron. Whirling around in the dark he fired at the spot the flash came from. Gunnion uttered a cry, for the bullet had broken his left arm. He fired back at the boy, but missed him, and then Fred fired his third shot which barely failed to reach its mark.

There came the sound of heavy feet ascending the stairs in a hurry, and a moment afterward three policemen dashed into the room, one of them flashing a dark-lantern ahead of him and illuminating the person of Gunnion.

With an imprecation the rascal fired at the foremost officer, and the policeman fell, slightly wounded. Before Gunnion could repeat the performance he was seized by the other two officers, and the revolver torn from his hand.

He put up an ineffectual struggle, and finally overcome by the pain in his arm, threw up the sponge.

Fred himself looked quite a wreck after the fight with Benson. He explained to the policemen what had happened since he phoned the station. Then leaving the wounded officer to guard Gunnion, the other two, accompanied by Fred, began to investigate the house.

Mr. and Mrs. Hazelton were found insensible in bed from the drug.

Eva Hazelton was standing at the door, frightened almost to death, for she had been awakened by the firing.

Fred ran over, grabbed her in his arms, and tried to reassure her.

"Don't be afraid, Eva," he said, soothingly. "I'm Fred Fox, the boy who saved you from the taxicab."

"Why are all these men in the house, and why don't papa and mamma get up?"

"These men are policemen. They came here to arrest two burglars who got in the house. Your pa and ma are all right. The burglars put them to sleep, that's all. They'll wake up presently."

Fred then told her that he had seen the burglars enter the house and had followed them in to prevent them from robbing the place.

One of the servants was called down to take charge of Eva, and then, leaving one policeman on the premises, Gunnion and his insensible pal were removed to the station, Fred going alone to tell the story of his night's experience.

Next morning's papers had a sensational ac-

count of the attempted burglary, and once more Fred found himself in print.

Brownson read it while eating his breakfast after leaving his friend in bed, and that was the first intimation he got that Fred had had a strenuous time after leaving the smoker.

He was greatly astonished, and instead of going downtown, he hastened back to the house to learn the story from Fred's own lips.

Long before that a physician had brought Mr. and Mrs. Hazelton around, and they were amazed to hear what had happened in the house.

They were even more astonished when they learned that Fred Fox had been instrumental in saving their property and in capturing the burglars.

Benson was sent to a hospital, but nothing could be done for him and he died inside of forty-eight hours from the blow inflicted accidentally by Gunnion.

That rascal's arm was patched up and Fred appeared against him in court.

He was held to await the arrival of officers from Buffalo to take him to State prison.

The Hazeltons could not half express their thanks to Fred.

Eight years have elapsed since the burglary and Fred Fox, after becoming the most successful of New York's street merchants, and saving up several thousand dollars, went into the novelty business with Brownson, and today their establishment supplies the majority of the fakers who ply their trade in Greater New York.

Mr. Hazelton helped the young firm by advancing Fred additional capital to expand his business, and now Fox & Brownson is the most important novelty house in New York city.

Eva, from being Fred's "little girl sweetheart" has become his real sweetheart, and cards are out for their wedding to take place shortly.

Next week's issue will contain "THE LAD FROM 'FRISCO; or, PUSHING THE 'BIG BONANZA.'"

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The Wall Street Hoodoo

— or —

The Boy the Brokers Feared

By Gaston Garne

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued)

"Very true. But everybody doesn't know that I know it, and I let them think just what they please. I am not doing a brokerage business at all, I am not lending or borrowing money. I'm simply waiting for bargains, and when I see one, I buy it, or at least I get my baker to do it."

"Yes," assented the broker. "When the bank buys you begin to work your hoodoo racket."

"That's all right. If I can hoodoo a fellow, and get hold of his money, that's my business. A man ought not to let another hoodoo him."

One day a reporter dropped in to see him and interview him for his paper.

He asked hundreds of questions, all of which he answered good-naturedly.

He asked him if he believed in a hoodoo.

"Yes. I believe in fools, too! There are lots of them. It's easy enough to hoodoo a fool, just as it is an easy job for a hypnotist to hypnotize certain kinds of people. You can't hoodoo a fellow unless he's short of gray matter and believes in such foolishness."

"Well, Bob, how do you explain things that have happened to people you claim to have hoodooed?"

He laughed and shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"Well, have you no explanation to make?" the reporter asked.

"No; I'll leave the explaining to the victims."

"Well, all the explanation they make is that those things happened, and they can't understand it."

"That's the trouble," he laughed. "They haven't the sense to understand many things. You can't hoodoo a fellow who isn't superstitious." When the interview was published it created a good deal of interest through Broad and Wall streets.

A famous financier read it, and laughed heartily.

It amounted to three columns in an afternoon paper.

"Say," said the financier, "that boy is the sharpest chap in the financial district. He may not be so well posted on finances, but he knows a fool when he sees one. He understands human nature, and that's the secret of his success. He seizes upon opportunities and makes the most of them."

The comment of the great financier were printed in the next issue of the paper, and of course it added greatly to Bob's reputation. Still, there were brokers who sought alliances with him.

Many men of small capital came to him and begged that he handle their money for them.

To all such he stated that he was not a broker, and had no license to do business at all; that what business he did was done by the bank.

CHAPTER XX.

How Bob Hit the Blind Pool.

One day a prominent Wall Street operator died suddenly. He was rated as a multi-millionaire, and had millions of dollars invested in a certain stock.

When the news reached the Street that he had died suddenly, all the stock in which he was interested dropped down from ten to five dollars a share, because it was expected that it would all be dumped on the market.

Instantly Bob rushed over to his banker and bought about 32,000 shares of the stock after it had dropped down. He knew, of course, when the estate was settled up, the stocks would rally, as they were all dividend-paying property.

They all rallied inside of four or five days, when Bob began quietly unloading, and in a week he had made about \$100,000.

By some means or other the report of his wonderful success got out, and he received the credit of having made five times as much as he really had.

Brokers shook their heads, saying they couldn't understand it; that he was an enigma. They wondered at his nerve. Where others would flee he would step in and pursue.

In discussing it an old broker remarked to Hennessey:

"They talk about Bob's nerve, but I think it is his lack of sense."

"Yes, I think so, too," said Hennessey. "But all the same the results stagger me. I was afraid to take hold of those stocks when they tumbled that way, but he reasoned that dividend-paying stocks would rally again, and he reasoned right. They did rally, and he made a fortune out of them. You may call it sense, ignorance, or nerve, or what you please, but it was a success. But I'll tell you he has nerve, and when he thinks he has inside information he acts upon it without depending upon anybody else's judgment."

He then told the story of his good luck in buying Round Hill mining shares when they were really not selling for more than fifty cents a share, and finally sold them at \$30.

"If he had had the money he could have made a million just as easily, but at that time he only had \$400, and bought 800 shares of the stock with it."

The broker asked Hennessey how much money he thought Bob had.

"Hanged if I know! I've tried to find out, but that's something that no one can do. If any one knows how much he has it must be Miss Rogers. He speculated for her, and now nobody knows how much she has; but she's rich, let me tell you."

"Look here, Hennessey, it is reported that they are engaged. What do you think about it?"

"I guess the report is correct. He has hoodooed every fellow who has tried to cut him out there."

"Oh, well, that's nonsense."

"Yes; that's what he says himself; but somehow or other he succeeds where others fail."

Several months passed before another attempt to corner a stock was made in Wall Street, and scores of brokers were wasting their time buying

and selling, sometimes barely making as much as ten dollars on a deal of ten thousand, and on others losing.

It was hard work for little pay, so a party of them got together and pledging each other to profound secrecy, they proceeded to buy up all the shares they could get of a certain Western railroad.

By the merest accident Bob learned that a clique was buying up the shares, but he didn't know who the members were.

He took the chances and bought up every share floating around the Street within twenty-four hours.

Of course, he did not buy individually, but through the bank's broker.

Every member of the clique cautioned the others to look out for the Wall Street hoodoo, and not let him get wind of what was going on.

But Bob had already gotten the wind and bagged great storms of it.

Gradually the stock began climbing until it had increased about \$15 a share.

Then everybody seemed to want it.

He quietly unloaded in blocks of two to three thousand shares each; and the clique or syndicate had to take it in order to hold up the price on the shares they already had.

When he had unloaded entirely, he remarked to a member of the clique that if he knew who the fellows were at the back of it he would tell them to get out of it, as there was an awful hoodoo resting on it.

"How do you know there is?" the member asked.

"Because I've been watching it. I sold out what I had of it, and hoodooed the balance."

"Look here, Bob, did you have any of that stock?"

"Yes; a big lot of it, but I got rid of it yesterday, and now whoever is carrying it on their shoulders are actually staggering under the load."

Bob didn't know that the man he was talking to was one of the clique, but he noticed the fellow's excitement, and actually saw him slip away and unload his share of the holdings at the current price, thus going back on his agreement with the others.

An hour later the whole combination went to pieces, and every member of the clique lost money except the one who betrayed the confidence of his friends.

Of course, crimination and recrimination followed, and soon it was known that Bob was the originator of the disaster, and he saw men looking daggers at him.

Some of them actually made threats of personal violence, for men smarting under financial losses frequently talk imprudently.

By this time all the brokers who speculated daily on the floor of the Exchange not only feared him, but hated him.

Many of them were afraid to join any combination to boom stock for fear he would slip in some way and spoil the whole thing.

Of course, others had the same chance to do as he did, but they seemed to lack his nerve.

Others lost confidence, and would enter into no combination with other brokers for fear of treachery.

A prominent broker, to overcome that difficulty,

suggested that they enter a blind pool, and that all of them chip in capital and place it in the hands of one whom they could trust and let him buy the stock without letting them know what it was.

Several millions of dollars were put up, subject to his check. Then he bought steadily the shares of a certain Western railroad. He was trying to get hold of a sufficient number of the shares to enable him to control it.

Then they could run things their own way. Bob knew nothing about it at all, and the thing worked admirably.

When the secret became known another blind pool was organized to work on the same principle.

The same parties were engaged in it.

A certain woman owned a block of a thousand shares, and when the manager of the blind pool tried to buy them from her she became suspicious, and believing there was some kind of a game going on, of which she knew nothing, she called on Bob at his office and had a long interview with him.

Bob knew she was a very wealthy woman. She assured him that before other parties could control the road by getting a majority of the stock they would have to buy the shares she owned.

"Now, Mr. Whiddon," she said to him, "I've been watching you ever since you became known in Wall Street. I don't believe in the hoodoo business they are talking about so much. But I do believe in your good luck and your good sense. I happen to know how many shares of this stock are on the market, and I know several parties who own large blocks of it. I don't care to sell my shares, for I believe that by holding on to them I can force the others to terms, but I'll let you have control of them so as to help you retain your grip. If you'll buy the other shares, I'll advance half the money, provided my name is kept out of it."

"All right, madam. Give me your check for \$50,000 and I'll put up the same amount, and I'll have my broker buy up the shares as far as the money will go. Then, if more is needed, we'll put up more."

She promptly agreed to do so, and the arrangements were made.

She gave him the names of parties, some of them living out of the city, who were holding many shares of the stock.

Bob knew it was best for him not to be known in it, so he posted his broker who represented the bank.

They bought the shares, paying cash for them.

The stock kept climbing up steadily, but the manager of the blind pool soon saw that he was bucking against some one unknown, and every one of the party who owned the stock were besieged by him only to find that the stock had passed beyond their control.

He tried in vain to find out who was controlling it. He lacked two or three thousand shares of having a majority, and to bring it out he ran it up to enormous figures.

It had gone so far that now it was impossible to retreat without submitting to heavy losses. One day somebody suggested to him that the young Wall Street hoodoo had a finger in it.

He shook his head, saying:

(To be Continued)

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 7, 1927

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

SAYS FISH LEAPED INTO HANDS; CLERGYMAN CORROBORATES STORY

Here's a fish story that has clerical corroboration. Wilfred Aubin went fishing with Oscar J. Bouffard and the Rev. Henri A. Blanchard of St. Bernard's Church.

Aubin was on the point of despair after an hour's unsuccessful wait. Then a seventeen-inch pickerel jumped from the water right into his hands.

NEW MILL WORKER TRAMPLED IN STAMPEDE AT QUITTING TIME

Leon Kasper, 20, had the bad luck to be standing just inside the gates at the Eagle Lock Company plant when the 6 o'clock whistle blew recently, and today he is nursing three broken ribs as the result of it.

Kasper was knocked down and trampled on as the workmen burst out on the gate, and when the last pair of feet had passed over him he was picked up in an unconscious condition and rushed to the office of Dr. Harold B. Woodward. It developed later that it was his first day at the factory and he had not learned of the perils of the quitting-hour stampede.

"MYTERY" CRUISER READY

The heavy cruiser London, which was built as a mystery ship was launched at Portsmouth, will, it is understood, remain a mystery ship for some years.

No one outside official circles knows the full particulars of the London, which is said to embody all the latest improvements. The vessel, which was built under the Washington treaty, will displace 10,000 tons and mount eight 8-inch and four 4-inch guns.

The speed will be thirty-two knots, and she will be protected by a curved deck against air attacks.

Prizes aggregating \$1,000 were offered by the American Road Builders' Association today for the best suggestions for reducing the annual num-

ber of highway accidents. The contest will close at midnight, Nov. 15.

More than 114,000 persons have been killed and nearly 3,500,000 injured during the past five years through highway accidents, the association announced in defining the need for a national safety campaign. Last year 25,302 were killed and 759,060 injured, the economic loss resulting from such accidents being \$638,875,500. The figures have been mounting steadily for five years.

The first prize in the contest is \$500, and there are nine others, totaling \$500. The awards are offered for "the best workable plan that will decrease street and highway accidents."

Winners will be announced in the press and by radio Jan. 11, 1928, during the annual convention and road show of the association in Cleveland. A report compiled from the ideas submitted for the contest will be presented to the convention.

LAUGHS

"Pa, what is home rule?" "Don't ask me. Ask your mother."

Bacon—Has your wife a cook-book? Egbert—Oh, yes. "Did you ever get anything out of it?" "Sure! Indigestion."

"I once thought seriously of marrying for money." "Why didn't you, then?" "The girl in the case did some thinking too."

Johnny—Mamma, will you wash my face? Mamma—Why, Johnny, can't you do that? Johnny—Yes, but I'll have to wet my hands, and they don't need it.

"Mamma, when people are in mourning, do they wear black nightgowns?" "Why, no, of course not." "Well, don't they feel just as bad at night as they do in the day time?"

Builder—I've just caught that man Brown hanging about smoking during working hours, so I gave him his four days' wages and told him to clear out. Foreman—Good 'eavens, guv'nor! That chap was only looking for a job.

Dealer—This is the best parrot we have, but I wouldn't sell him without letting you know his one fault; he'll grumble terribly if his food doesn't suit him. Miss Fitz—I'll take him; it will seem quite like having a man in the house.

"Here," said Teddy's father, exhibiting the little boy a coin, "is a penny 300 years old. It was given to me when I was a little boy." "Say!" ejaculated Teddy. "Just think of anybody being able to keep a penny that long without spending it."

Tailor—The postal service is in a wretched condition. Friend—Never noticed it. Tailor—Well, I have. During last month I posted one hundred and eighty statements of accounts, with requests for immediate payment, and, so far as I can learn, not more than two of my customers received their letters.

Storming The Hacienda

All morning the heavy artillery had been pounding away at Vera Cruz. That city, which was thought to be impregnable, was threatened with ruin. The air was filled with sulphurous smoke and screeching shells. At night the scene was one of magnificence, terrible as it was.

In addition to the din of battle, the eye could mark the circles of fire, where shells were soaring through the air to and from the doomed city. By land and by water had General Scott invested the city, and his gunboats and land batteries were making the earth quake beneath their thunder.

"General," said a captain of artillery in one of the land batteries, approaching General Scott with the usual military salute, "we are very much annoyed by some Mexican sharpshooters from the bluffs above our works."

"Are they very many in number?"

"I do not know how many they are," the artilleryman answered. "There may not be over twenty men, and there may be a hundred, probably twice as many, but they creep out among the rocks on the bluff above us, and shoot down our gunners. Three of my best cannoneers were killed this morning and my lieutenant is mortally wounded."

"They must have a force beyond the hill that we do not know of," said General Scott, thoughtfully.

"A ranger who is with us says that there is an old hacienda in a narrow valley beyond the rocky bluff, which is the home of General Pedro Cassandra, a prominent Mexican. He thinks that these Mexican sharpshooters are acting under his command. This is more serious than it may seem, General," said the artilleryman. "There is danger of these sharpshooters silencing our batteries altogether."

"I realize it all," General Scott answered, thoughtfully. "I appreciate the danger, I assure you."

"If you would only permit, Colonel Stanbury would send a force around and go up among the chaparral; we have no boats to spare——"

"I will give these sharpshooters immediate attention," said General Scott. "Go back to your guns, in due time they shall be punished."

"I think I know the very man to intrust with this business," said General Scott. "He is young and ambitious to see service. He will be delighted to have such an opportunity as storming the hacienda."

Ordering his boat, the general descended into it, and instructed the oarsmen to take him to a large warship which stood farthest out in the gulf. The eight sailors at the oars bent to their work, and despite the searching shell and plunging shot from the Mexican city, they reached the ship, and went aboard.

A young officer in the uniform of a lieutenant of infantry was on the deck, and saluted as the General came over the side of the vessel.

"Lieutenant Bligh, you are the very man I have come to see," said General Scott, with a smile.

"What is it, General? Detailed service, I hope," said the lieutenant, his face growing considerably brighter.

"That's just it, lieutenant. I have come here to

give you a chance to volunteer to do some special duty if you will take the risk."

"I will, General. Consider me as having volunteered to do the duty."

"Well, Lieutenant Bligh, I suppose you have noticed those bluffs half covered with chaparral west of our land batteries?"

"Yes, sir, I have seen them."

"Beyond them I have been told is a large stone hacienda, where are a number of Mexicans and guerrillas. They are sending over squads of sharpshooters every hour to annoy our gunners, who are unable to get at them. I want some one to take two boats of soldiers and marines and pull along under that bluff until they reach the narrow stretch of land beyond," the general pointed with his hand off to the northwest, "land there and march up that pass to the old hacienda, which must be carried by storm."

"I will go, General. When shall I start?"

"Immediately after dinner."

By half-past one the two boats were lowered and the young commander of the expedition began choosing the men for the expedition.

"Don't leave me out," said Harry Greene, a young soldier, almost a giant in size, who was a special friend of the lieutenant's.

"Nor me, either. You may need us both," put in Luke Mason, another member of Lieutenant Bligh's company.

He was unable to take them all, for every man who knew him was anxious to be one of the perilous expedition, but he chose the two men above referred to, and at the head of forty soldiers, sailors and marines, all armed with muskets, bayonets or cutlasses he pulled away from the side of the ship at precisely two o'clock.

Not two cables' length behind them came the second boat, the oarsmen pulling as if for life.

"Do you see that point of low land!" said Lieutenant Bligh to the sailor at the rudder. He was pointing to where the shore was but a few feet above the level of the sea, about a mile away, and beyond the long, rugged bluff.

"I do, leftenant," the sailor answered.

"Land us right there."

"Hello, leftenant," called out Harry.

"What is it?"

"I see suthin' a movin' among the rocks and thorn bush." "Is it a man or beast?" said the young officer, raising his glass.

"A man, by jeminy; it's a greaser. Shall I plug him?"

"Don't fire unless you are quite sure of hitting."

Harry Greene in the bow and Luke Mason in the stern, each rose and discharged a musket at the enemy, who were popping away at them from the chaparral on the bluff. A storm of leaden hail rained about the boats.

Two or three sailors and soldiers were hit. One man fell over the side and sank beneath the waves.

"Onward—sweep down the rascals. We will teach them to assassinate gunners," cried the lieutenant, pressing his way forward toward the bow.

"Sit down, leftenant—sit down, or ye'll be riddled with bullets," cried a soldier, but Charley Bligh had no thought in his mind save victory. He reached the bow of his boat just as it turned in to shore. It was not three cables' length at this

time from the landing point. A volley of leaden hail came from the crowd of dark-skinned Mexicans huddled together there, and another volley from the boats answered them.

Several men on both sides fell.

"Sweep on—sweep them from the face of the earth!" cried the young officer as he stood with one foot on the bow of the foremost boat ready to jump the moment it came near enough to the shore.

Several of the Mexicans had fallen, and the others would have fled but for a tall, white-haired man, whose stately form could be discovered darting about hither and thither, waving his saber in the air and issuing orders to the Mexicans in their native tongue. He was evidently of pure Castilian blood, and his now snow-white locks were once of a jet black.

"That's two fair shots I've had at him," said Harry Greene, as he began reloading his gun. "That feller's a wizard; lead won't hurt him. Throw in some silver."

The boat was in pistol range from the shore, and the lieutenant fired both of his, wounding one of the Mexicans.

While the bow was yet several feet from the shore he leaped upon the sand, his sword in his hand, and sprang toward the white-haired old warrior, who was using superhuman efforts to rally his scattered forces.

"Surrender!" thundered Charley, raising his sword above the old man's head.

"Never!" was the answer, in correct English.

Down came the young officer's sword, falling with a sickening clash against the uprising blade of the Mexican. Clash, clash, rang steel to steel. Charley Bligh had always prided himself on his skill as a swordsman, but he discovered that he had met his match. His antagonist was cool and calm, while the eager American was excited and pressed the Mexican hard.

The lieutenant stumbled over the body of a Mexican, and came near falling. The chivalrous old Castilian disdained to take any advantage of an accident, and waited for the young American to recover his balance.

In the meanwhile the prows of the boats had struck the shore, and the sailors and soldiers were leaping to land with fixed bayonets or drawn cutlasses. Overawed by the determination of the Americans, the Mexicans were flying up the narrow pass through a grove of palms.

Two young men seized their leader, and by main force dragged him up the narrow pass through the dark forest of palms and to the valley beyond.

"Our work is but half done," cried the lieutenant, as soon as he had regained his feet. "We must follow them up and storm the hacienda."

Quickly detailing a small party to remain with the boats, he formed the others and hurried away after the fleeing enemy.

Through the pass and beyond the grove of palms they entered one of the most delightful valleys they had ever seen. Nowhere, save in this tropical land, could flowers of such enormous size be found. A grand old hacienda stood at the upper end of the valley, in front of which was a low stone wall. Behind the wall were half a hundred Mexicans.

On at the head of his column, shouting and cheering and showing them just where to strike

and how, despising danger, went the brave lieutenant. The Mexicans fight with a valor not to be despised. The wall is reached at last, and over it crowd the victorious Americans. Backward step by step the Mexicans fight, pressed by the American soldiers.

The hacienda is entered, and once more the ambitious lieutenant sees the white-haired man who has been his antagonist.

"Now, you old gray-haired scoundrel, we will have this out," the American cries, leaping once more at him.

Then sword rang to sword, and the clashing of steel blades filled the vast corridor.

Doors were being broken in all parts of the house, and while it was a scene of confusion and carnage everywhere, in that vast corridor the lieutenant and his opponent were alone. The fury of the American forced the Mexican back, but he hoped by coolness and skill to get some advantage over his young antagonist.

The Castilian's foot slipped on the smooth stone and he fell to one knee. At this moment a sweeping blow falling upon the side of his blade, broke it off close to the hilt.

"Ha, ha, old fool, I have you now!" cried the lieutenant, enraged at the resistance he had met, and in a second the point of his sword was at the throat of the Mexican.

"Spare him—spare him in the name of the Holy Virgin, spare him!" screamed a female voice, and like a flash of light a fairy-like form darted out from some apartment hitherto unseen, and threw herself between the kneeling man and his would-be slayer.

Lieutenant Bligh caught but a glimpse of her face, and started back with a cry of amazement.

"Louisa! Heaven, can it be true?" and he rubbed his eyes as if he half believed himself in a dream.

"Lieutenant Bligh, Lieutenant Bligh, spare, oh, spare my father! Little did I think when I met you but a year ago in New Orleans, that our next meeting would be like this!"

For a moment the young lieutenant was unable to speak.

"Fear not, senorita, for this man and yourself shall not be harmed. I did not dream that it was your home I was invading."

He hastened to assure the Mexican, who was no less personage than General Cassandra, that he should be protected.

The hacienda had been stormed and every Mexican save a few that had escaped to the mountains made captive. Lieutenant Bligh sent one of the boats back to the ship with news of his victory, and asked that General Cassandra be paroled.

The request was granted, and the Mexican general was never taken from his own home, but there under a light guard he remained during the brief Mexican war. Sharpshooters did not annoy the American gunners any more, for all were captives or hiding in the mountains on the north.

Then, when the war was over, he called at the hacienda he had stormed and took away the brightest jewel of the household, which was the fair senorita herself. She was no longer a Mexican, but the wife of the American who had conquered her father. The general willingly surrendered his daughter to so brave a man, for he knew that her happiness was safe in his keeping.

GOOD READING

HOME MOVIE NOT A TOY, CUSTOMS COURT RULES

An imported moving-picture machine for use at home is not a toy but a regular article of merchandise. The distinction is unimportant, save that if ranked as a toy, the little machine would be subject to 70 per cent. ad valorem duty; whereas when it is classed not with toys but with projection lenses, the duty is only 45 per cent. This ruling was made recently by the United States Customs Court.

MADRID CENSURES A COMPOSER

Padilla, musical composer and author of the popular song "Valencia," recently incurred popular censure in Madrid for beating time with his hands alone instead of using a baton, when conducting a revue of his own composition at the Esclava Theatre.

This incident recalls to the Epoca de Madrid the tragic fate of Lulli, a celebrated composer. It is related that while conducting a Te Deum in the chapel at Versailles as a thanksgiving for the recovery of Louis XIV he struck himself a blow with his baton, as a result of which gangrene set in, causing his death.

THREE HURT IN GAS BLAST

Three men were burned and hurt in an explosion of illuminating gas in the cellar of the Brooklyn City Railroad car barn at 849 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, recently. They had smelled gas and went to the cellar to investigate. They were there only a short time when the explosion occurred. Other workmen carried them to the street.

Frank Swichwerick, of 347 Nineteenth Street, Brooklyn, and Timothy Meehan of 579 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn, were taken to Kings County Hospital. Swichwerick's son, George, 19, was attended by the ambulance surgeon and went home.

YANKEE SKILL IN ARITHMETIC

Perfect score in addition was made by sixth-grade pupils in two towns in New England in a recent arithmetic contest sponsored by Boston University. Returns were received from approximately 113,000 children. The greatest accuracy as a whole was shown by pupils in small rural schools. The next highest score was the 91.6 per cent. made in addition by pupils in both the fifth and seventh grades. No perfect scores were made in subtraction, multiplication or division. The highest scores in each of these subjects were made by seventh-grade pupils, who averaged 93.5 in subtraction, 51.1 in multiplication and 86 per cent. in division.

ARRESTED IN DIAMOND RUSH

How a number of would-be beggars attempted to steal a march on their competitors in the recent rush for claims in the Welverdien diamond field is told in a Johannesburg dispatch.

The police suspected that diggers and others would conceal themselves on the ground with the

object of securing desirable claims before the arrival of the runners and made a search with the result that fifteen were arrested. Three of them had actually buried themselves in the ground leaving only a small hole enabling them to breathe. The others were hiding in native huts covered with blankets.

One ingenious individual scooped out a huge ant-heap and hid himself in it. He was a sorry spectacle when he was dragged out by the police.

CITY WOMEN UNAWARE HOW FAR THEY WALK

There is a tradition that the healthful exercise walking came to us from the country. There may have been such a time, when, with the horses in harness in the fields, the member of the family who had to go to town on an errand, walked three, four or five miles. Today the car is brought out; and the dweller on the farm does not even have to walk out to the well, since the house is piped for water.

In a city there remain many incentives for walking. The difficulty of parking a car increases, and transit lines fall short of their purposes because they do not criss-cross to suit the pedestrians' occasions.

So it is the city woman who walks, block after block, unconscious that when the day is done she has walked several miles. Not so often as a man is she out merely for the exercise. She has a definite shop in view, and walks more than a man. The man swings off for a walk, with the definite purpose of bettering his physical condition, and later boasts that he has walked from the Battery to Forty-second Street.

CHINESE STAND BY FARM LIFE

Of China's vast population at least 80 per cent. is classed as agricultural. The social and economic life of the nation rests so definitely on agriculture that the Chinese themselves say all the inroads of modernism and the industrialization of the larger cities have made little impression on the majority of the people.

A survey, covering a full year's operation of 150 farms in one of the most prosperous regions of Central China, was recently conducted by Nanking University. The average size of the farms surveyed was 4.9 acres. Farm buildings in China are often made of mud bricks, mixed with straw or bamboo mats, held together by wooden straps. Farm implements, the survey found, were primitive.

A touch of the naïveté that so often characterizes the Chinese peasant is brought out in the report. Attention is called to the investment in implements and equipment per crop area, which was found to be nearly twice as much on the larger farms as on the smaller ones, because the small farm owners made a practice of borrowing tools from the larger farms. In Hunan the farmers borrow or hire animals for field work, usually oxen, and it is not uncommon to find joint ownership of one animal.

CURRENT NEWS

FIVE TIMES WED AND DIVORCED, WOMAN OF 21 TO MARRY AGAIN

Five times married and five times divorced, Mrs. Flossie Lane, 21 years of age, still believes in marriage. She obtained her fifth divorce recently and then announced that she expected to marry again.

UNIFORM MOTOR CODE THROUGH LONG ISLAND

As the result of a recent survey of traffic regulations in the various communities on Long Island by officials of the New York Automobile Club, plans are being made for a conference of local police authorities with a view to standardizing the regulations throughout Long Island.

Similar activities in Westchester County under the leadership of Sheriff Thomas V. Underhill have been productive of excellent results.

THE CZECHS WAGE WAR ON GYPSIES

So numerous and aggressive are the bands of gypsies in the Republic of Czechoslovakia and so loud the complaints of the country folk who are victims of their depredations that the Prager Press recently reported that the Minister of the Interior had decided that something drastic must be done.

In an interpolation addressed to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of the Interior by the Czechoslovak National Socialist Deputies in the Chamber it was pointed out that the country people were so terrorized by the wandering bands of gypsies that they would gladly pay a special tax for the purpose of enabling the Government to take steps to make the countryside safe for peaceful inhabitants.

NEW ZEALAND WINTER IS RADIO PARADISE

Winter in New Zealand is apparently the long distance radio paradise.

W. A. Waters, a radio engineer and amateur of Palmerston North, in a letter to the General Electric Company at Schenectady reports instances of reception as follows:

"Yesterday I rebroadcast Holland in the morning, listened to WGY for two hours in the afternoon, and finished up with JOAK, Tokio, Japan, on the loud-speaker for an hour."

An English set manufacturer, in his catalogue, guarantees that his short wave sets will receive 2XAF or 2XAD, Schenectady, or money will be refunded. He said that these signals are used as short wave standards in England.

HOW INDIA'S HOLY MEN ACHIEVE MERIT

Being a Holy Man in India is indeed a hard life. Almost any one can become a Sadhu or Holy Man in that teeming country if he can stand the trials. Let the hair grow disheveled; smear the almost naked body with grease, paint and ashes; cultivate a faraway look; sit on spikes in a swing suspended from the limb of a tree; bury the head in the ground for long periods; fast until the body becomes a mere shadow; make

long pilgrimages to holy places by rolling to them; these and a few other tribulations entitle one to be called a Sadhu.

Recently it was reported that a Sadhu had broken all known records by sitting on a bed of nails for the last seven years. While so sitting in a perambulator he traversed many of the sacred rivers of India.

HOW THE PLANT FAMILY DEVELOPS

In the largest botanical museum in the world, located in the New York Botanical Garden—an imposing Italian Renaissance structure looking not unlike an imperial palace—one of the chief exhibits show natural plant families in the sequence of their development. It begins with a plant that has the appearance of clay. It consists of a single cell and grows gradually into two cells, which continue to multiply, eventually developing into a "high-order" plant.

The exhibit contains a collection of the better known plants used for the production of many of the necessities of life. The specimens include foods, drugs, gum, spices, oils, corks and many others. They are arranged in their botanical sequence, showing the lower order of plants first.

The fossil botany group shows the stages of evolution through which the ancestors of present-day plants have passed. An exhibit that never fails to attract attention shows the varieties of plant life to be found within a hundred-mile radius of New York City.

The museum also contains laboratories where specimens, gathered from all parts of the world by various expeditions, are classified and arranged. A large botanical library is maintained.

PARIS DISCOVERS VALUE OF THE ROOF GARDEN

Paris has discovered the value of the roof garden and there are indications that it may become as popular and as general as in New York. The Automobile Club has a roof restaurant much like the establishments found on the roofs of various New York hotels and clubs; it is an alluring place in which to dine on a warm Summer evening. On the roof of the Louvre the employee who looks after the plumbing of the museums has built for himself a small garden with vines and rustic seats. The Bank of France has installed shaded seats on its roof where employees may rest during the two-hour luncheon period.

It seems odd that Paris did not long ago adopt roof gardens. Cramped with a fortified city wall, its dwellings consisting almost exclusively of five and six story apartment buildings and of private houses built one against another, and having a climate that is often sultry, the city needs more outdoor space. There are, to be sure, delightful gardens and courts attached to some houses, but it is only a small proportion of the population that can hope to enjoy such luxuries.

Many concierges have created miniature gardens on narrow ledges of sixth floors. The small iron-railed balconies so much in evidence in Paris are often crowded on warm days.—N. Y. Times.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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